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THE LIFE OF LAMARTINE

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME II

ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE
From an engraving by W. J. Edwards after the portrait by F. Gérard

THE LIFE OF
LAMARTINE

BY

H. REMSEN WHITEHOUSE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME TWO

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To His Excellency

MONSIEUR J. J. JUSSERAND

French Ambassador to the United States

With the expression of my highest esteem and profound personal admiration, I respectfully dedicate this study of the life and work of one of the noblest and purest literary and political glories of France.

H. R. W.

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THE LIFE OF LAMARTINE

CHAPTER XXXII

THE CHAMPION OF ABUSES — HOME LIFE

SHORT as was to be this first Ministry of Thiers (February 22 to September 6, 1836), it established the reputation of the statesman who was to play so preponderant a rôle in the destinies of his country thirty-four years later.

During the few months of the parliamentary session Lamartine, although refraining from purely political debate, found himself in frequent conflict with the Thiers Administration on questions of economic legislation as well as the conduct of the Cabinet's foreign policy in the East.

Although embodying anti-protectionist theories since accepted as sound principles of trade economics, the speech on the liberty of commerce which Lamartine delivered on April 14 gives small evidence of a comprehensive grasp or appreciation of the fundamental basis of the industrial issues; while the flights of more or less utopian rhetoric seriously detract from the value of the truths he enunciated. Interruptions were frequent, some of a personal character, amongst others that of M. Jaubert, who reproached the speaker with having facilitated the investigations of an English free-trader whom the British Government had sent across the Channel to preach commercial reform — Mr. Bowring. The attack was certainly unwarranted, for Mr. Bowring, as Lamartine explained, had undertaken his mission as much in the interests of France as of his own country. There could be no question of commercial espionage; and the fact that Mr. Bowring was a personal friend of the great Irish agitator O'Connell in no way compromised Lamartine politically. Far from repudiating such a friendship had it existed, Lamartine asserted that he would consider it an honour to be the friend of so illustrious a patriot, and one who had defended with such energy and talent, for the last eighteen years, the independence, the liberty, and the religion of his country.[1]

In the course of the debate Lamartine dwelt upon the facilities the English Government had ungrudgingly accorded to Victor Jacquemont, a French botanist who had undertaken a perilous voyage of exploration in India. Leaving France in 1828, Jacquemont, thanks to the friendship of Lord William Bentinck, and to his knowledge of Persian and Hindustanee, had penetrated into Cashmire and to the borders of Thibet. He died of fever at Bombay on December 7, 1832.[2]

On May 25 an opportunity was afforded Lamartine to attack the policy of the Government again on the question of the abolition of slavery in the colonies. On this great moral issue the orator was at his best, and the noble sentiments he expressed could not fail to impress deeply not only his audience in the Chamber, but public opinion in two hemispheres. The Government, seeking merely the sanction of the Chamber for the colonial budget, desired to adjourn indefinitely a discussion of the abolition of slavery in the West Indies. To Lamartine such a course was inadmissible. He indignantly refuted the objection that for the present a debate of such an issue was useless and dangerous. England had recently,[3] after a struggle extending over a period of forty-three years, yielded to the pleadings and substantial arguments of Wilberforce. Lamartine demanded that France, which had fought so nobly for the grant of civic liberties for her citizens, and the world, should follow the example of her neighbour. In the French colonies some forty thousand masters held in vile subjection over two hundred and fifty thousand of their fellow-men. The speaker did not advocate unconditional emancipation, involving financial ruin and the destruction of economic conditions in the islands. But he demanded that the motion for an adjournment of the question be overruled. It was a burning issue, and one which the nation which had made such superhuman sacrifices in the name of liberty could ill afford to postpone. He counselled moderation, the gradual freeing of the blacks, and the framing of an equitable scale of pecuniary compensation to the masters whose property was taken from them. The financial sacrifice the mother country would be called upon to make was not considerable, would in fact, if extended over a period of years, hardly be felt by the taxpayer. The system lately adopted in the British colonies, of an intermediate stage of apprenticeship for the liberated slaves, had worked well during the three years it had been in effect, and Lamartine suggested a similar experiment in the French West Indies.

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[1] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. I, p. 235; also vol. III, p. 438.

[2] Cf. Prosper Mérimée, *Portraits historiques et littéraires*, p. 55.

[3] August 28, 1833.

The peroration of this really magnificent appeal to the humanitarian instincts of his hearers contained a phrase which has been often cited as typical of the Lamartinian philosophy. "J'apporte parfois à cette tribune quelques vérités qu'on appelle avancées, qu'on appelle idéales, qu'on appelle peut-être pertubatrices, et qui, selon moi, sont éminemment conservatrices; car je ne connais rien au monde de si révolutionnaire qu'un abus qu'on laisse subsister, rien au monde de plus révolutionnaire qu'une immoralité, qu'une iniquité qu'on peut corriger

et qu'on laisse consacrer dans la loi."[1] The motion failed; but two years later[2] Lamartine again took up his theme, and in February, 1840,[3] renewed his attacks against this iniquitous institution at a banquet of the French society for the emancipation of slavery. Few men in France had given the matter closer attention: from the moral as well as the economic point of view, Lamartine was master of his subject. The constitutional sentimentalism inseparable from his treatment of any social problem was, however, in this instance, amply compensated by the practical common sense he brought to bear on the abolition of an institution so at variance with modern conceptions of the laws governing the moral administration of the body politic. For the final abolition of this crying social abuse France owes much to the indefatigable efforts of the legislator who possessed the foresight to discern the economic fallacies of the system, and the courage to proclaim, in the face of determined opposition, the patriotism of according the rights of citizenship to a despised and downtrodden race.

The session of 1836 was fruitful in useful lessons for Lamartine, and he took the fullest advantage of every issue to perfect himself in parliamentary tactics. In June he wrote to the ever-faithful friend of his youth, Virieu: "Nine times in succession I have spoken, and the Chamber is silent, attentive, and even enthusiastic. I am making progress in improvisation and parliamentary eloquence. In four years, if God aids me, I shall have conquered this enormous difficulty. I work immensely, as I never did before at any time of my life."[4] More and more he became the champion of abuses political, administrative, fiscal, parliamentary, and electoral. Drawing ever nearer the people, the "national conscience," as he styled it, he felt with ever-increasing dexterity the pulse of popular sentiment. France was launched on the sea of Democracy, and the Citizen-King, who stood at the helm and who owed his throne to the democratic revolution, must, in Lamartine's estimation, truly and faithfully impersonate and incarnate the spirit of the new order. In his eyes political sagacity forbade any attempt to arrest the irresistible impulses; but the dangers created by blind resistance on the one hand and revolutionary violence on the other might be averted by an intelligent appreciation on the part of the Government of the social aspirations seething throughout the country. With this object in view he sought to enlarge the political franchise, and confer on an ever-increasing number of citizens the moral rights and obligations appertaining to free men under a régime professing the broadest constitutional liberties. Like De Tocqueville, whom he resembled in more senses than one, Lamartine deplored that "the policy of principles was sacrificed to a policy of expedients and intrigue."

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. I, p. 264.

[2] February 15, 1838.

[3] Also in March, 1842.

[4] *Correspondance*, DCXXIX.

It was natural enough, of course, that Louis-Philippe, descending as he did from a long line of arbitrary rulers, should at times resent (honest democratic sovereign though he was) the continual encroachments of levelling doctrines calculated still further to debase his royal prestige in the eyes of Continental courts. Of the Tuileries, however, and the dynastic ambitions of the Orléans established there, Lamartine took little thought. Their mission was a temporary one, acceptable enough until such time as France, and by France he understood again the "popular conscience," should awaken and pronounce definitely for the system of government best adapted for the maintenance of order, and the furtherance of the social ideals which constituted humanity's inalienable heritage. Meanwhile it was his individual ambition to form and guide his fellow-citizens; not within the limits of party restrictions, however, for, as he wrote Virieu, he could find no place in the political groups formed since 1830: "I want a party which dates farther back and embraces a broader policy."[1] Enigmatical as the phrase sounds, it can perhaps be satisfactorily interpreted as an expression of Lamartine's aspiration to reconcile the traditions of the past with the principles of social evolution he had embraced. It has been shown that the threads of politics and philosophy were inextricably interwoven in the web of moral ethics Dargaud had spun. "Do you wish to fathom my soul?" he asked Virieu. "It is sad and harrowed. Philosophy is penetrating and transforming it, not for evil, but lending another form." [2] Respect for his "Royalist past," as he terms it, still held him back almost as much as did his reverence for his mother's simple creed.[3]

His mistrust of the doctrinaires forbade any political alliance with a party which still exercised considerable influence, but whose long struggle with the frankly revolutionary elements of July he foresaw must soon end in defeat. This party he recognized as having been a necessity in the earlier stages of the new régime, but in 1836 he believed the doctrinaires "gratuitously odious to the nation." [4] This he told Thiers, whom he reproached for acting as a tool of a party doomed to destruction; and if we are to believe Lamartine, Thiers took the hint. Be this as it may, he certainly welcomed the advent to power of the short-lived Ministry of February 22, although, writing at a much later date, he denied that Thiers ever possessed the instincts of a statesman.[5] Thiers certainly did not deserve this criticism, for during this, his first, brief tenure of office, he gave every evidence of the adroitness in public affairs his subsequent triumphant career was to verify. But in view of the chaotic condition of politics and the multiplicity of warring parties within the Chamber, it was hardly to be expected that the young Premier would give universal satisfaction. In those days of impassioned eloquence fashionable and intellectual Parisian society flocked to the Chamber as it does to an Academic reception to-day. Certain orators had become public favourites; and these charmed and thrilled their audience as some great actor might have done in the romantic dramas so dear to the heart of the generation which had produced a Victor Hugo, and of whom Chateaubriand was still the idol. Whenever such brilliant rhetoricians as Guizot, Berryer, Thiers, or Lamartine might be expected to speak, the Chamber was filled to overflowing.[1]

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCXXVIII.

[2] *Ibid.*, DCXXII.

[3] Cf. *Mémoires politiques*, vol. I, p. 331.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 331.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 332; vol. III, p. 20.

Lamartine was not insensible to this form of flattery. Nor was he indifferent to the adulation he received both as poet and as statesman in the aristocratic literary or purely political salons he assiduously frequented when not detained at home by his duties as host in the rue de l'Université. The foremost official political salon was, of course, that of the President of the Chamber, but those of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and of the Interior were equally important in the eyes of conscientious deputies, eager to avail themselves of every opportunity for gauging the currents of national and foreign public opinion. M. Guizot's salon during the eighteen years he played a conspicuous rôle, either as a member of Louis-Philippe's Government or as a dominating factor in the Chamber, was the recognized centre of political influence. With Lamartine he shared the admiration of English and foreign visitors of distinction. But the two men were never friends. As an acknowledged leader of the doctrinaires Guizot was frankly antipathetic to Lamartine, who, while admitting his considerable literary and political talents, was repelled by the cold, dogmatic Calvinism, combined with a narrow and unyielding conservatism, which characterized in Guizot both the writer and the statesman. Lamartine made no secret of his dislike of Guizot and those of his ilk, who incurred his open condemnation. "They were, they are, and always will be antipathetic to the French character. Pretension constitutes their only claim to talent: ambition their only force."[1]

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[1] De Beaumont-Vassy, *Les Salons de Paris*, p. 265.

"I am working as I never did before," Lamartine wrote in February, 1836. But politics alone did not absorb all his time and energies. "Jocelyn" was finished and on the point of publication. A few days later the jubilant author informed his friend Virieu that the new poem was unanimously voted a greater success than the "Méditations." Everywhere the book met with enthusiastic praise (the critics had not yet discovered its heresies of dogma): "It is read in the schools by all professors at their lectures, and it is selling by thousands of copies. They say it is beautiful."[2] Nor did the author exaggerate the success he had achieved. In twenty-seven days twenty-four thousand copies of the book were sold in France alone, while during the same period seven editions were published in Belgium, and an equal number in Germany. Literary circles in France received "Jocelyn" with transports of artistic enthusiasm. In his "Journal d'un poète" Alfred de Vigny writes that he spent his nights over the work, and notes the delight its perusal afforded him.[3] Two years later the poets met for the first time in the salon of the Marquise de la Grange, and for two hours sat apart "in a dark corner in closest converse." From literature and politics their talk drifted to a discussion on the comparative merits of Islamism and Christianity, Lamartine maintaining that the followers of the Prophet practised civilization in the higher sense by virtue of their charity. "Nevertheless," objected the author of "Cinq-Mars," "Islamism is merely a *corrupt Christianity*." "*A purified Christianity*," hotly contested the author of the "Voyage en Orient." [1] Lamartine has said that politics redoubled his love of literature. Absorbed as he might be in questions of the hour, he sought continually to give his speeches the literary polish he admired so fervently in the orators of Greece and Rome and among those of his contemporaries whose superiority he acknowledged. Referring to his oratory during the troublous times of 1848, when his eloquence held at bay the bloodthirsty mob besieging the Hôtel de Ville, he states: "I often had occasion of observing, during the long dialogue the hazard of a revolution established between me and the populace, that the more literary my harangues were, the closer became the attention of my hearers; that vulgarity of language only gained their contempt; but that when words suited to the loftiness of their sentiments were used by the speaker, he obtained an ascendant over the mob in direct ratio with the diapason of his eloquence. Grandeur, that is the literature of the people: be magniloquent, and you can say what you want." [2]

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. I, p. 316.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCXXVI.

[3] Cf. L. Ratisbonne, *Alfred de Vigny*, p. 107.

Literary perfection in his speeches was often, it must be admitted, obtained at the sacrifice of clearness, and of that blunt directness which hits hardest when stripped of superfluous verbiage. The substance of his discourse suffered too frequently by reason of this worship of form. But although this scrupulous searching after classical perfection unquestionably impaired the effectiveness of their oral delivery, the readers of Lamartine's speeches — even

[1] Cf. Ratisbonne, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

[2] *Cours de littérature*, vol. 1, p. 66.

those dealing with the driest political or economic problems of the hour — will hardly cavil at the delicate beauties of phrase and sentiment. Thoroughly versed in the humanities, Lamartine had early taken as his models in parliamentary eloquence those masters of oratory and polished debate, Fox and the younger Pitt. With such guides as these, in conjunction with his own innate tendency towards a literary expression of the most commonplace subjects, it is hardly to be wondered at that hard-headed politicians found him artificial and exaggerated. "J'aurais voulu," he admits, "que la vie publique mêlât le talent littéraire à tout." And going a step further, he insists that mere speech is insufficient; the orator must clothe the most commonplace subjects with the dignity of eloquence; "That which cannot be said with literary elegance is not worth saying." This utilitarian age would certainly refute so sweeping an assertion. But we must never forget that Lamartine belonged temperamentally to a school which classed rhetoric among the most sublime of parliamentary virtues, and which was not inclined to disagree with him when he expostulates that all subjects touching humanity should be treated "avec l'accent surhumain de la philosophie, de la tragédie ou de la religion." [1]

An acquaintance which rapidly ripened into friendship about this period was that with the Abbé Cœur. The future Bishop of Troyes, at that time a fashionable pulpit orator who drew all intellectual Paris to his church, was an ardent apostle of Christian Democracy. Nor was Lamartine alone in his admiration of this eloquent reformer. At a later date Cavour, writing to Santa Rosa, confessed that the doctrines of this ecclesiastic had penetrated and touched his intelligence and his heart: "le jour où je les verrai sincèrement et généralement adoptées par l'Église," he added, "je deviendrai probablement un catholique aussi ardent que toi."[1] It was possibly the Princess Belgiojoso, who brought about the meeting between Lamartine and the Abbé Cœur; but Virieu had already spoken of the preacher and lauded his charm.[2] On several occasions the abbé was his guest at Monceau, and Lamartine, as the acquaintance ripened, pronounced him "un homme qui a du fond et qui ira loin."[3] Although the abbé certainly exercised no direct influence over the author of "Jocelyn," the principles of the Christian Democracy he professed were even more in accord with those Lamartine himself entertained than had been the more concrete doctrines of Lamennais. The close intellectual bonds binding Lamartine to Lamennais have been already mentioned. They were apparent to the disciples of the theologian, and clearly discernible to students of the poet's metaphysical doctrines expressed in the "Politique rationnelle," the "Voyage en Orient," and even "Jocelyn." Yet after the publication of Lamennais's "Paroles d'un Croyant" (April, 1834), the influence of the abbé's political theories in questions affecting the organization of Lamartine's cherished *parti social* dwindled to the vanishing point. Greatly irritated by what he considered a check to the policy he was striving to inaugurate, he wrote Virieu that he had done his best to prevent the publication in its present form. "It is, in two words," he exclaimed, "the Gospel of insurrection, Babeuf made divine. It causes great harm to me and my future party [the *parti social*], for nothing kills an idea like exaggeration. . . . The beauties of style are incomparable: it horrifies everybody and renders youth fanatic."[4] The militant ardour of the priest who in 1824 had declined a cardinal's hat, to be ten years later stigmatized by the Holy

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[1] *Cours de littérature*, vol. I, p. 65.

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[1] Cf. *Epistolario*, vol. I, p. 326.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCVIII.

[3] *Ibid.*, DCXVIII.

[4] *Ibid.*, DXCIV.

See "a dangerous pervert," was indeed perilous to Lamartine's prudent policy of reform. Ultra-Democracy was as distasteful to the author of the "Politique rationnelle" as was the retrograde attitude of the ultra-Legitimists, who sought to discredit the moral influences of the progressive programme of reconstruction the *parti social* was framed to uphold. Neither a revolutionary nor a reactionary, the Abbé Cœur gave promise of useful coöperation: nowhere conspicuous, his discreet restrictive influence is occasionally discernible.

But the man who, with the exception of Dargaud, was most closely associated with Lamartine's intellectual activity from the moment he entered political life, was Count Adolphe de Circourt. It will be remembered that shortly before the fall of Charles X, Lamartine had been offered the post of French Minister at Athens. At the same time Circourt received the appointment of Secretary to the Legation in Greece. The Revolution of July, entailing the resignation of Lamartine from the diplomatic service, separated for a time the two men who were already almost friends. On his return from the East, and his assumption of parliamentary duties, Lamartine found M. de Circourt and his wife (a Russian) established in Paris, and the intimacy between the two households developed rapidly. Circourt was a man of vast erudition, possessed of a phenomenally retentive memory, and gifted with a facility for historical and scientific analysis which has been justly termed encyclopædic. As Lamartine remarked: "Circourt is the Library of Alexandria. I pass my life consulting his shelves and deciphering his papyrus." [1] Of this storehouse of knowledge the deputy from Bergues made constant use. In Circourt's papers, now preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale at Paris, quantities of notes from Lamartine are to be found asking information and data for his speeches on an infinity of subjects, political, economic, legal, metaphysical, social, historical, and literary. Even the most Olympian of the orator's eloquent harangues are found to contain crumbs of the terrestrial learning of this "human encyclopædia." As will be seen later, Lamartine, on his accession to power in 1848, confided to Circourt the difficult and delicate task of a diplomatic mission to Berlin. Meanwhile, a Legitimist by family tradition, like his illustrious friend, Circourt was gradually turning towards the enlightened Liberalism the honestly constitutional elements of the July Monarchy were determined to uphold.[1] "M. de Circourt," wrote Lamartine after the Revolution of 1848, "sans être républicain de cœur, était assez frappé des grands horizons qu'une république française, éclose du génie progressif et pacifique de la France nouvelle, pouvait ouvrir à l'esprit humain, pour la saluer et la servir." [2] Cavour, who was an intimate friend of the Circourts, and whose correspondence with the Countess covers a period of many years, in no wise shared their enthusiasm for the poet-politician.[3] The great Italian statesman, in those early years an observant frequenter of the political world in London and Paris, had many opportunities of meeting the Lamartines in Madame de Circourt's salon. The historical houses whose hospitality had been boundless during the Restoration closed their doors after the advent of the Bourgeois Monarchy in 1830. Madame Récamier still received at the Abbaye-aux-Bois; but there Chateaubriand was god, and his literary worshippers outnumbered the purely political element. As Madame d'Agoult

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[1] A dig at Circourt's extremely illegible handwriting. Cf. Lacretelle, *op. cit.*, p. 44; also Georges Bourgin, *Souvenirs d'une mission à Berlin*, vol. I, p. xxv.

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[1] Cf. Huber Saladin, *Le Comte de Circourt;* also, Lamartine, *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 158.

[2] Cf. C. Nigra, *Le Comte de Cavour et la Comtesse de Circourt*, pp. 48–62.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 159.

(Daniel Stern) complained on her return to Paris in the late thirties, four foreigners now monopolized the field wherein her compatriots had so long held undisputed sway: the Princess de Lieven, Madame Swetchine, Madame de Circourt, and the Princess Belgiojoso — three Russians and an Italian;[1] to whom might have been added Mrs. Lee-Childe, whose status as an American gathered round her for many years Legitimists, Orléanists, and Imperialists alike, and who rubbed shoulders with the *fine fleur* of the literary and artistic, the political and scientific, worlds for over a generation.

But brilliant as was the life he led in Paris, Lamartine was never so happy as when he dwelt in one or the other of his rustic châteaux on the countryside of Mâcon. Here, during the summer at Saint-Point and the autumn and early winter at Monceau, husband and wife dispensed a simple hospitality combining Anglo-Saxon cordiality with Gallic enthusiasm. Madame de Lamartine, while she retained a certain inherent reserve of manner, had adopted many of the traits of her husband's nation. "She assimilated," says Lacretelle, "our mode of thought; expressing herself with an accent that daily became less marked." A neophyte at the time of her marriage, she had embraced with the zeal of the convert the most minute details of the Catholic dogma. More versed in orthography and the intricacies of French grammar than her illustrious husband, strange as it must appear, Lamartine confided to her the correction of his proof-sheets.[2] Shocked at the growing philosophic tendencies in the writings submitted to her, she sought at first, by all the resources at her disposal, to attenuate the lapses from orthodoxy which were ever more apparent. Gradu-

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[1] *Mes Souvenirs*, p. 353. For the salon of Madame de Belgiojoso, cf. Whitehouse, *A Revolutionary Princess*.

[2] Lacretelle, *Lamartine et ses amis*, p. 10.

MADAME ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE

ally, however, she inclined to the spirit rather than the letter of the creed she had adopted, although the criticism to which her husband's so-called heresies gave rise distressed her to the end. Prompted by admiration and a sense of duty, she accepted with greater complacency the militant republicanism of later years, although herself by birth, breeding, and conviction a stanch adherent to patrician principles. Madame de Lamartine has been accused of literary prudery: "Elle voulait," observed one of her friends, "à tout prix vêtir Ève en dépit de la Bible." Charles Alexandre, another close friend and secretary during the later years, describes in his "Souvenirs" the modification she insisted upon when revising the final edition of "La Chute d'un Ange." "Nous faisons un massacre," lamented Alexandre; "nous abattons des centaines de vers dans cette forêt vierge de 'La Chute d'un Ange.' Lamartine ignore le crime; elle m'a supplié de garder le secret. Je suis son complice d'épuration, en protestant, en défendant le droit de cette poésie antédiluvienne." [1] Lamartine yielded under protest, but he yielded. "It was superb yesterday," he wrote Dargaud when forwarding one of his metaphysical articles. "I spoilt it this morning in deference to the wishes of my wife." [2] "Madame de Lamartine," wrote another critic and personal friend, Madame Émile Ollivier, "who was so nobly devoted to the man, understood far less his genius. Possessed of a lofty and righteous character, but narrow and primed with exotic prejudices, her literary prudery discountenanced any audacity of thought or form." [3] No woman could have been more completely attached to her husband: her acceptance of the evil times which overtook the couple during the last years of their wedded life was remarkable for its cheerful resignation. And yet, if those who knew them most intimately are to be believed, perfect harmony never fully existed between them. The memory of "Elvire" (Madame Charles) rose as a ghost before the eyes of the wife, whose retrospective jealousy was never completely calmed. As Charles Alexandre noted: "Associée comme elle l'était à un grand homme dont elle admirait le génie plutôt qu'elle ne partageait les idées, au fond de ce ménage, il y avait une dissonance intime, constamment sauvée par des efforts réciproques de douceur et de bonté." [1]

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[1] Charles Alexandre, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

[2] Cf. Madame Émile Ollivier, *Valentine de Lamartine*, p. 22.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 20; cf. also Armand Lebailly, *Madame de Lamartine*, p. 48.

The loss of their two children made a stay at Milly painful to both parents. Lamartine loved the humble manor-house on account of the associations of his childhood, and above all because it had sheltered all through her married life the mother whose memory he cherished. "Milly, c'est l'Himalaya de mon bonheur!" he confided to Lacretelle as they approached the village on the occasion of the young secretary's first visit.[2] But Milly was a sepulchre: the tomb where lay enshrined the most sacred reminiscences of a past forever dead; the joys and hopes of youth together with the ashes of the childish creed he had lisped at his mother's knee. But aside from sentimental considerations the house was totally inadequate to the requirements of an establishment such as Lamartine now maintained. When guests from Saint-Point or Monceau were taken to visit the dilapidated homestead, it was to satisfy their literary curiosity concerning the haunts of their host's childhood — scenes now historic through the medium of the descriptive verses in "Milly, ou la Terre natale," "La Vigne et la Maison," or, at a later date (1845), "Le Moulin de Milly."

[1] Charles Alexandre, *Madame de Lamartine*, p. 44.

[2] *Lamartine et ses amis*, p. 36; cf. also *Les Confidences*, p. 66 *et seq.*

Lamartine has left us a picture of his days at Saint-Point during these years (1835–38), which, when supplemented by that drawn by Lacretelle, may be taken as typical. In his letter to M. Bruys d'Ouilly, which serves as a preface to the "Recueillements poétiques," published in 1839, the author answers the question so often put him, how in the midst of his agricultural labours, his philosophic studies, his travels, and the incessant turmoil of his political duties, can he find time for poetry? No translation could pretend to render the exquisite tenderness and pathos, the faultless style and poignant psychological interest of this epistle — a *chef d'œuvre* in French literature. "*Traduttore, traditore*," as the Italians say: and inevitably the translator must prove a traitor in his fruitless effort to convey the rhythmic cadence of this beautiful prose. Suffice it to say that before the neighbouring church clock has slowly chimed the hour of five, Lamartine, leaving his bed, weary of dreams, lights his lamp and kindles the fire of faggots in the vaulted tower chamber where he passes, in solitude, the long hours of silence before dawn. It is November, and the light autumnal frost creaks beneath his feet as he steps for a breath of air upon the wooden balcony which overhangs the sleeping park. . . . On the old walnut writing-table at which his father and grandfather had sat before him, lie several books: a Petrarch, a Homer, a Virgil, a volume of Cicero's letters, besides old copies of Chateaubriand, Goethe, and Byron, poets and philosophers, and close at hand the little edition of the "Imitation of Jesus Christ," which had belonged to his mother, stained by traces of her tears. . . . Holding nonchalantly a pencil in his hand, the poet traces outlines of trees or ships on the white sheet before him, awaiting the inspiration the familiar scene evokes. . . . Some of these verses take definite shape, others are consigned to the flames. These hours, stolen from his municipal and political duties, before elections, the harvest, the vintage, or social obligations claim him, are the sweetest in his life of continual activity. "The existence of the poet is renewed for a few days," he writes. "You know better than anybody that the poetical life has never at most formed more than a twelfth of my real existence." "Le bon public qui ne crée pas comme Jéhovah l'homme à son image, mais qui le défigure à sa fantaisie, croit que j'ai passé trente années de ma vie à aligner des rimes et à contempler les étoiles; je n'y ai pas employé trente mois, et la poésie n'a été pour moi que ce qu'est la prière, le plus beau, et le plus intense des actes de la pensée, mais le plus court et celui qui dérobe le moins de temps au travail du jour." [1]

"When the first bell for midday breakfast sounded," amplifies Lacretelle, "Lamartine hastily completed his toilet, and joined his wife and guests in the small dining-room on the ground floor of the château." As the master of the house ate but sparingly, he preferred to slip into his seat during the progress of the meal. He conversed but little, his brain being still occupied with the morning's work. But if he noticed that his silence threw a gloom over his guests, he immediately made the necessary effort and joined in the conversation. His dogs surrounded him, noisily claiming their share of the food upon his plate. On rising from table Lamartine, his pockets bulging with bread and sugar, hurried to the stables where a dozen horses eagerly awaited the daily treat. Lacretelle remarks that the occupants of Lamartine's stalls were generally but sorry nags, yet each new acquisition was, in the master's eyes, "an incomparable treasure, worthy to be ranked with the Prophet's mare." It is certain that Lamartine considered himself a judge of horseflesh. We have only to consult his letters to Virieu, whom he often charged with the purchase of his steeds at Lyons, to appreciate the fact that he gave the matter considerable thought. On leaving the stables Lamartine joined the ladies for coffee in a small summer-house overlooking the valley, and plans were discussed for the afternoon's driving and riding. Lamartine was no sportsman, yet he often carried a gun; not for game, however, but in case he met a mad dog — a contingency never known to occur. After an early dinner, the company adjourned to the salon on the floor above: Lamartine joined in a game of billiards, or in the general conversation, and invariably, as nine o'clock struck, took his candle and retired. Under his arm he carried Voltaire's "Letters," a work he read and re-read incessantly, as he did later Thiers's "History of the Empire." Half an hour after the circle in the salon broke up, and the château was wrapt in silence.[1]

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[1] Preface of *Recueillements poétiques*, dated Saint-Point, December 1, 1838.

At Monceau the tenor of daily life was somewhat more varied. Owing to its proximity to Mâcon, a drive of hardly more than a half-hour, visitors were more frequent. For years a continual stream of all that was best known in national and international society, men of letters, women of fashion, artists, actors, poets young and old, halted in the old Burgundian town, and turned off the highroad, on their way from Paris to Lyons and Italy, to visit the Lamartines at Monceau. M. and Madame Dargaud were among the regular autumnal guests, as were Louis de Ronchaud (whose admirable revision of the final edition of Lamartine's complete works is appreciated by all lovers of the great poet's genius), and M. and Madame Adam Salomon, the former a sculptor of note, the latter an associate of Madame de Lamartine in her charitable enterprises. To these must be added Edmond

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[1] Cf. Lacretelle, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–32.

Texier, a journalist and *littérateur*, whose translation of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" (1854) did much to advance the anti-slavery cause in France. Nor must we forget such intellectual stars as De Tocqueville and the De Girardins, husband and wife: the former the founder and proprietor of the influential newspaper "La Presse," the latter the divine "Muse de la Patrie," the poetess and writer over whose pseudonym, Le vicomte Charles de Launay, appeared, from 1836 to 1848, the witty "Lettres parisiennes," the like of which had not been seen in France since Madame de Sévigné, and whose style recalls that of Addison and Steele, and the "Spectator" at its best. Alfred de Vigny, Liszt, George Sand, the "Sanscrit Baron" Eckstein and his wife, the D'Esgrigny; Vignet, Virieu, and Bienassis, those friends of youth to whom Lamartine clung ever more closely as the years rolled by; and the Abbé Cœur were faithful visitors. Add to these the entire countryside within a radius of twenty miles, and the very considerable family connection, and it will be seen that while at Monceau the poet and his wife were rarely alone.

As President of the Conseil Général of the Department of Saône et Loire, a dignity conferred upon him by an overwhelming majority in 1836 (seventy-two votes out of a total of seventy-five),[1] Lamartine was constrained to receive his colleagues and influential local politicians, and discuss with them provincial affairs. That Lamartine and the advanced liberal portion of the Conseil Général which followed him were not in harmony with the Prefect of the Province has already been hinted at. M. de Barthélemy has been cited in these pages as hostile to the deputy from Bergues, whose influence in his native department was ever increasing. "In the Council," writes this official, "he had attributed to himself a specialty,

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCXLII.

CHÂTEAU LAMARTINE AT MONCEAU

the protection of foundlings, a subject which prompted every year the delivery of a magnificent and touching speech, which, and I do not exaggerate, inevitably brought tears to the eyes of seven or eight of his colleagues."[1] Lamartine would not appear to have viewed in the same light as did the Prefect the financial disadvantages of the policy he advocated when dealing with these poor foundlings. At any rate, his opinion was diametrically opposed to that of the representative of the Central Government, who expressed himself deeply shocked by the immorality of Lamartine's defence of the unfortunate girl-mothers, the guardianship of whose offspring had become onerous to the State. The subject was one which must deeply interest so ardent an apostle of social reform. Lamartine had, indeed, made the equitable solution of this vexed problem one of the aims of his public life, and lost no opportunity of pressing his objections to the new policy the Government advocated.

In accordance with the legislative decrees of 1811, foundlings were adopted by the State, and placed under the guardianship of the directors of specially organized institutions. Each *arrondissement*, or political district, was provided with such an asylum, and in each asylum there existed a species of turnstile, so arranged that the mother, desiring to abandon her infant to the care of the institution, could do so from outside the building without being seen. A bell connected with the device notified those on watch inside that a new inmate claimed admission. As soon as possible the child was sent to a nurse in the country, the State paying for its maintenance during the first six years of its life. Between the ages of six and twelve the allowance was reduced, and after that age no further expense was incurred, although the directors of the asylum still exercised surveillance over the foundling and the family to whose care it had been entrusted. Every facility was given the mother to reclaim her child should she desire to do so, and if the foster-parents preferred that their charge seek service elsewhere on the attainment of its twelfth year, every effort was made by the asylum to keep in touch with its former ward. As a matter of fact, the majority of these foundlings remained in the peasant families who had given them shelter, and married and settled down as useful and respected members of the rural community where they had passed their youth. The system worked admirably on the whole; but inevitably abuses crept in, and were seized upon by zealous economists and statisticians, as well as self-appointed censors of public morality, to discredit the humanitarian scope of the institution. In many of the provinces the turnstile was abolished, as it was asserted that inhuman parents, whose union was perfectly legitimate, took advantage of the secrecy of the device in order to free themselves of the expense of rearing their offspring. Not content, however, with abolishing the turnstiles, which screened the honour of many a deceived woman, it was now proposed to leave the foundling only temporarily with its foster-parents, and according to the economic requirements of various districts, to deport the children from one end of France to another: in a word, publicly to declare them social outcasts, thus lessening or destroying the chances of eventual recognition by one or the other of the parents who, perhaps, by reason of fortuitous circumstances, had been compelled to separate themselves for a given period from their offspring.

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[1] *Souvenirs d'un ancien Préfet*, p. 202.

Although by so doing the regular chronological sequence of events is overlooked, it would seem opportune to note here Lamartine's first public utterance — a truly prophetic utterance! — on this important social problem.

For four years previously he had periodically brought forward the evil in the discussions of the Provincial Council; but it was only on April 30, 1838, that he addressed the meeting at the Hôtel de Ville in Paris, in defence of the laws of 1811, which, in his estimation, were best calculated, from the humanitarian as well as the soundly economic point of view, to meet and alleviate a crying social evil.[1]

Lamartine argued that, by making social outcasts of thousands of abandoned children, the proposed laws endangered the safety of society. Torn from the only homes they knew, from associations which frequently held the promise of a life of honest labour on the farms they had inhabited from childhood, the foundlings must inevitably drift to the great cities, there to swell the ever-increasing elements of discontent and social unrest. In such surroundings, without guidance, or even the semblance of family ties, many would degenerate into criminals. The loss of farmhands in the rural districts was an economic consideration of great importance, and one which landowners, such as the speaker, could more adequately appreciate than the theorists and moralists who deprecated the present system. But a still greater evil stared the advocates of the repeal of the laws of 1811 in the face. By abolishing the turnstiles which mercifully mitigated the shame of the distracted mothers, the unhappy victims of man's selfish passions were incited to crime. The parent, no longer able to confide her infant secretly to the ever-watchful care of the asylum, found herself confronted by three alternatives: the open acceptance of her shame and a consequent career of vice; the abandonment of her child in some secluded spot where it might perish from exposure; or infanticide. Lashing the political economists who cloaked their avarice with sophistry, Lamartine accused them of endeavouring to convince the taxpayer that compassion was a mere seductive sentiment, and the exercise of humanitarian principles a crime. The abuses of the present system, it was claimed, amounted at most to three or four per cent on a total of thirty-two thousand foundlings. But in spite of the most careful and searching enquiry extending over a period of four years, Lamartine himself had been unable to substantiate a single instance of the abandonment of their offspring by parents united in legitimate wedlock. And after all, what was the paltry economic consideration of such abuses compared with the magnitude of the principles involved? A few francs might be saved on the budget; but the economy would be purely fallacious.

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[1] Speech, "Sur les enfants trouvés," April 30, 1838.

"You will pay in vice, you will pay for gendarmes, you will pay for police, you will pay for prisons, you will pay for penitentiaries, for loss of population and by increase of crime, sevenfold what you refuse to pay for care and forethought. Condemn to social ostracism the vast army of pariahs who have lost caste by no fault of their own, and you sin not only against the fundamental principles of Christianity, the initial precepts of the great Revolution of '89, you commit a grave political error. It is not by such conduct that revolutions are avoided: it is by such actions that they are prepared. Nine hundred thousand foundlings are at the present moment living in your midst. . . . I am not an enthusiastic fanatic of the French Revolution; too much blood befouled it, and time has not yet winnowed its crimes from its virtues. But if it be possible to distinguish a dominant principle, and, so to speak, the soul, of that great social movement, it is most certainly the principle of Christianity; it is the principle of mutual assistance, of human brotherhood, of legal charity. One sees it flare up with each law framed by the Constituent Assembly, and it shines even in the darkness and storms of the Convention. Most assuredly at that time had a legislator proposed to deport thirty-three thousand children annually, to rend the affections cherished in two hundred thousand households, to abolish the turnstiles and close the asylums, such a one would have been crushed under the indignation of his colleagues and the maledictions of the people. At that time barbarous political laws were enacted, but mild and humane social laws were framed. Why? Because if only the voice of passion was heeded when political enemies were concerned, the voice of nature was not yet smothered beneath the logic of interests and the sordidness of systems. Then asylums and houses of shelter were multiplied; the guardianship of foundlings was vested in the State; orphans were adopted by the country. They carried out the precepts of Saint-Vincent de Paul. They built up what you destroy to-day."

The enthusiasm of his audience waxed with the peroration of this impassioned address.

"Do not throw back into the jaws of vice or death these children which shame or misery confides to you," he pleaded. "A society which has no use for man; a social body which fails to regard man as its most precious asset; which receives man on his entrance to life as a scourge and not as a gift, and which protects property only at the expense of morality and nature, such a social body will meet its judgment. Our eyes must be turned away from such."

Although only partially effectual, in so much as it retarded definite legislation until May 5, 1869, Lamartine's vigorous attack on the proposed innovations has been dwelt on at length as typical of his espousal of the interests of the humble and disinherited classes of society. All of the man, all of the social reformer, the utopist as well as the common-sense politician, can be found in this generous outburst. Scoff as selfish economists might at his "championship of immorality," his "admiration of girl-mothers," [1] none could doubt the lofty sentiment of humanity which prompted his eloquence. Time has proved the validity of his arguments in favour of utilizing for the public weal the outcasts who, unredeemed, must constitute a danger to the social fabric.[2] The enormous increase of crime in France to-day — crimes in the vast majority of cases attributed to the homeless degenerates of the floating urban population — could have been checked had the letter of his recommendations been followed. And yet Lamartine himself raises a doubt in our minds as to the absolute sincerity of the convictions he so eloquently professed. It is certainly disconcerting to read in his "Mémoires politiques" (written over twenty years later) phrases such as the following: "I needed practice in the tribune, where practice alone perfects, in order to acquire, together with the faculty of inspiration, a certain amount of recognition in a land which idolizes eloquence, so that when the unknown moment arrived that I should have need and opportunity of a hearing, I should not find myself forgotten. In consequence I devoted myself, not at all by preference, but by necessity and design, to the treatment of purely neutral humanitarian and speculative problems, such as those concerning foundlings, the death penalty, popular economics, the salt-tax, solitary confinement, etc., etc." [3]

That Lamartine would have preferred to occupy himself exclusively, and from the outset of his political career, with the great questions affecting national and international polity, there can be no doubt. As we know, however, his peculiar standing forbade such action. Nevertheless, the above amounts almost to a disclaimer of a line of conduct which had won for him popular recognition, and the admiration of many men whose political and social principles were not invariably in accord with those he professed. But to read in this explanation a cynical repudiation of the generous spontaneity of his enthusiasms would be totally to misjudge both the man and his actions. The confession is perhaps an unfortunate one; but the nobility of purpose of his social propaganda is in no wise clouded or diminished by the frank acknowledgment of the ulterior objects he had in view.

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[1] *Souvenirs d'un ancien Préfet*, p. 204.

[2] Cf. speech on same subject, July 15, 1839.

[3] *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 321.

From the protection of abandoned infants to that of beet-root sugar the step is almost from the sublime to the ridiculous. "Je viens de sortir du sucre avec honneur et bonheur," Lamartine wrote Virieu on June 3, 1837.[1] The matter was one which affected closely the economic interests of his constituents in the North, where the beet-root sugar industry was assuming vast importance. Hitherto the native product had been free from direct taxation; but the competition was weighing heavily upon the planters in the colonies, who found the market more and more restricted with the increase of cultivation and improved industrial machinery at home. The importation of cane sugar was seriously affected, and the public revenues suffered in consequence. To remedy this inconvenience the Government proposed a reduction of the tariff on colonial sugars; the loss to the Treasury to be counterbalanced by a tax on the home production. Keenly alive to the injustice done the colonists, and yet equally desirous of protecting the interests of his constituents as well as those of the treasury, Lamartine sought a middle course which might reconcile all parties to an inevitable sacrifice. In a letter to Virieu, he states that no question is more familiar to him than the one of which he treats, and that he has converted most of his adversaries to the necessity of direct taxation on the home product.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCLII.

Diplomacy was needed. In a conference with forty-two of the largest manufacturers of beet-root sugar in his electoral district, Lamartine, his resignation as deputy in one hand and his conditions in the other, was successful in demonstrating that the true interests of the manufacturers lay in the acceptance of taxation. The immunity and privileges enjoyed by the home producers were manifestly unfair, he urged: concessions were unavoidable, for, should the Government decide to place colonial sugar on the free list, the native industry would be seriously if not ruinously affected. Of two evils they must choose the lesser. In his speech in the Chamber a week previously, Lamartine had expressed his unlimited faith in the magnificent future awaiting the development of the beet-root industry. Even now, given equal fiscal obligations, the producers in the North could compete profitably with the colonial planters. But if they insisted on the maintenance of their privileged immunity, and the government, constrained to make equitable concessions to the colonials, reduced by say twenty per cent the tax on imported sugar, another element of competition loomed before them. It was a recognized fact that the colonies were now producing the maximum permitted by the labour conditions existing in the islands. Reduce the revenues of the Treasury by twenty per cent, and the deficit might be made up by encouraging the importation of foreign sugars. The beet-root industry must inevitably collapse in face of this double competition. "We have the right to impose a tax on beet-root sugar," Lamartine urged his colleagues in the Chamber. "We need the funds. Let us tax it; but let us tax it with moderation so as not to kill but to foster an industry yet in its infancy, but of incalculable promise."[1] That he spoke by the authority of his constituents is confirmed by a phrase in the above-cited letter to Virieu: "After two hours' discussion they saw that I understood their business better than they did themselves; they acknowledged it, and *unanimously* signed formal instructions to vote and to speak in favour of the tax."

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[1] May 26, 1837.

Well might Lamartine congratulate himself on the successful issue of an embarrassing situation. He had gained a moral victory without alienating the confidence and sympathy of the vested interests at whose cost it had been obtained. Moreover, his solicitude for the interests of the humble consumer added to his growing popularity with that class of the public which stood outside the Council Chamber.

CHAPTER XXXIII

PARLIAMENTARY PROGRESS

IT is, of course, impossible to follow in detail Lamartine's parliamentary progress — his speeches fill six large volumes, and were frequently but of temporary interest. Others, on the contrary, indicate the general trend of the gradual evolution of his political and social conviction, and cannot be passed over in silence. Examples have been given of the social and economic principles he sought to defend at this period. During this same session of 1837 Lamartine was to give proof of a political acumen of no mean calibre. It will be remembered that in October, 1836, Prince Louis-Napoleon, then an exile in England, allowed himself to be convinced that the army could readily be persuaded to espouse his cause, and that the empire his uncle had possessed could practically be his for the asking. The lamentable fiasco at Strasbourg was the result. Pardoned by Louis-Philippe after his arrest, the misguided pretender was banished to America, and his military accomplices, tried by a civilian jury strongly imbued with Bonapartist sympathies, were one and all acquitted. This judicial scandal, as it was appropriately termed, brought universal reprobation on a procedure offering such flimsy guarantees for the dignity of established order.

Early in the following session the Government introduced a bill which provided for the separation of the civil and military jurisdictions when officers and soldiers were implicated with civilians in plots affecting the safety of the State. This "Law of Disjunction," as it was called, gave rise in the Chamber to violent opposition on the part of a coalition of the Extreme Right and Extreme Left, and to an interminable wrangle between the great legal authorities who sought to invalidate or uphold the measure. Lamartine defended the Government with an impassioned eloquence, tempered by strong common sense, such as he had never before displayed. "Don't believe that I desire to be made Minister or that I seek an Embassy, as I am accused of doing," he wrote to his friend Dubois. "Je ne veux que la liberté des citoyens et la ferme discipline de l'armée, sans laquelle point de liberté." [1] Little sympathy as he felt for the Government, he was determined to "support a Cabinet composed of honest men against the Thiers Ministry and its shameful associates." But whatever his individual sympathies, Lamartine clearly recognized the fact that opposition to the proposed measure meant imperilling the constitutional liberties he was determined to uphold at any personal cost. "I spoke day before yesterday for two hours and a quarter in the midst of an inconceivable tumult," he informed Virieu,[2] and he adds that although at times confused, he was never crushed, and kept his head throughout the uproar his speech provoked.

His utterances were, in truth, of a nature to inflame the partisan passions seething beneath the principles involved. All shades of honest opinion, he maintained, must shudder at the scandal of the triumphant acquittal of those concerned in an armed rebellion against the flag, against discipline, and against the country. It was not his intention to criticize the verdict; but he was in honour bound to absolve the Government of participation in this shameful denial of justice, and to uphold the motion brought before the Chamber for the disjunction of civil and military jurisdiction where such outrages were concerned. It was a sophism to pretend that the Government in liberating the principal culprit had violated in the eyes of the jury and the country the sacred principle of the equality of all citizens before the law. Louis-Napoleon was an exile, a proscript, and as such owing no allegiance to France: he stood on a different plane than those who enjoyed the privileges of citizenship and had sworn fealty to their country's institutions. The Government had punished this offender by means of the only law it could apply, that of banishment. There was, he insisted, no parity, no assimilation possible between a simple citizen who is invested with no public function, charged with no responsibilities, and a military commander who, making use of the bayonets at his disposal, may conspire against the State and endanger the lives of his fellow-citizens, provoke civil war, and establish military dictatorship. In the one case the offender should be amenable to the jurisdiction of the civil courts, but in the second, courts-martial alone should try and condemn. The criminal judicial leniency they had just witnessed must serve as a warning of the peril the future held.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCLXV.

[2] *Ibid.*, DCXLIV.

With prophetic eloquence he denounced the tendency to inculcate in a military country such as France, too easily fascinated and intoxicated with the glories attaching to a fortunate despotism, the cult of a triumphant past. Still so near the 18th Brumaire, and the 20th of March, 1815, a Government as yet so insecurely established ran great risks in educating the people's notions of liberty by the continual display of the symbols of a glorious but despotic rule. Was the Revolution of July to serve as a pedestal for the Napoleonic apotheosis, and not as that of the liberty of the people? Liberty was the heart's desire of every Frenchman; but it was not yet among their customs. The despotism of the sword might all too readily pass through the breach they so carelessly left unguarded. Three hundred thousand soldiers, in time of peace, were pledged to follow those under whose command they were placed. "Si vous n'avez pas une justice efficace pour prévenir les lois du sabre," he warned, "vous ne serez pas longtemps un peuple libre." [1] Nevertheless, the speaker, although recognizing the necessity of the Law of Disjunction, was unprepared to accept it in its proposed form as a permanency. "I accept it as a provisional measure," he stated, "as a legislative *coup d'état*, dictated by the breach made in the country's institutions by the verdict of the Strasbourg jury." Frequently interrupted from all sides of the Chamber, contradicted and even vituperated, Lamartine insisted on finishing his address in spite of the uproar. In view of the accusations levelled against him a decade later, the closing sentences of this important speech are of peculiar significance. "I repeat that the country does not seek a revolution through violence, by means of the sword, any more than it wishes to attain its ends by means of street broils: I affirm that in speaking as I do I interpret absolutely the popular sentiment. As for myself, I declare that I am willing to be the victim of the first assault of any revolution that I personally provoked, incited, or desired: but with the same energy I affirm that should my country be unhappily destined to traverse fresh troubles, I prefer a hundredfold the revolutions of anarchy to those of the barracks."

And in spite of the clamour to which this statement gave rise, he proceeded to explain his preference for the one rather than the other. Anarchy meant excess: side by side with great crimes, resulting from them, in a sense, great virtues and generous sacrifices often sprang: but military revolutions, brutal and unreasoning, led only to selfish ends, to the lowering and degradation of all the moral forces of a country. "Des révolutions populaires, le plus tard possible," he cried; "des révolutions militaires, jamais." Reading the signs of the times as few of his generation did, Lamartine, indeed, merited Talleyrand's flattering assertion that he had penetrated the heart of his country. Behind any government, without exception, he foresaw, within "seven or eight years," a "Sword" or a "Convention de prolétaires." [1] If we substitute eleven for seven or eight, the prophecy was *arithmetically* correct. Already this fact was being recognized by the leaders and members of the numerous political factions in Parliament, and the member for Bergues found himself ever more frequently solicited to abandon his isolation and join forces with one or the other of the contending parties. It is hazardous to speculate as to what the eventual effect on his political career might have been had he listened to the blandishments and thrown in his lot *unreservedly* with, say, Count Molé. "Lamartine is a comet of which the orbit has not yet been calculated," said Alexandre von Humboldt. With a temperament such as his, with ambitions such as he entertained, the acceptance of a secondary rôle was impossible.

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. I, p. 300; also Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 162.

It was false modesty on his part to refer to himself as an *amateur* in political debate,[2] for already in 1837 he had an exalted opinion of his gifts of oratory, and was convinced that his career was to be a distinguished one in Parliament. Never could he have subjected himself to the discipline which the leadership of a great political party imposes on chief and associates alike. The "comet" remained independent of the solar system to which all well-regulated astral phenomena are supposed to belong, and its orbit can even now only be approximately calculated by the laws of probabilities, aided by a close observation of established facts. As a politician, as a parliamentarian, and, when occasion served, as a member of a political party, his usefulness was undeniable; but his own convictions — for convictions (all opinions to the contrary notwithstanding) he most assuredly possessed — outweighed, in every single instance of his career, the obligations dictated by party discipline or the enforcement of a rigid party policy. As M. de Mazade has justly defined him, Lamartine was a guest in all camps; a volunteer of genius in the *mêlée* of opinions; an orator whose eloquence charmed rather than convinced; a man of daring presages, swayed by tradition, yet an upholder of the established order, now with the Opposition, now with the Government; "in a word, a glorious dissenter," giving unqualified allegiance to no cause and to no political group.[1] As an observer of the external and internal phenomena affecting the social atmosphere of the revolutionary era he traversed, his intuitions were often astounding. In a phrase which grasped and held the imagination, he summarized a whole situation. Often foreseeing what others could not yet discern, as, for instance, the peril of a reawakening of the Napoleonic epic and in his warnings concerning the Law of Disjunction, he earned for himself the appellation of *vates*, or soothsayer, as the Latins styled their poets. His policies were misunderstood by his contemporaries; but his aspirations, then considered chimerical, are commonplace realities to-day. He spoke for the future, and the present has vindicated him.[2]

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCL.

[2] *Ibid.*

On October 3, 1837, M. Molé declared the measure "indispensable," the Chamber was dissolved, and new elections were fixed for November 4. Writing confidentially to his agent in Burgundy, Lamartine states that although he upheld the cabinet of conciliation formed by

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[1] *Lamartine*, p. 95.

[2] Cf. speech by M. Paul Deschanel, President of the French Chamber, at the celebration at Bergues on September 21, 1913, commemorating Lamartine's election as deputy in 1833.

Count Molé on April 15 against the coalition headed by Thiers, Guizot, and Odilon Barrot, he disapproved the Government's action in dissolving the Chamber. The Coalition, it will be remembered, reproached Count Molé's administration with being unduly influenced by the personal policies of Louis-Philippe.[1] In 1793, Count Molé's father and mother both perished on the scaffold, and he himself, a youth of twelve, wandered alone and unprotected about Paris. The future statesman, who during his long and distinguished career was remarkable for his social charm, his distinguished manners, his refined habits, and cultivated tastes, struggled into manhood dependent for many months for very existence upon the casual charity of one of the worst parts of Paris. Recognized and rescued, he was eventually consigned to the care of a relation in the country.[2] When he rose to power his political past was the target for the violent and vituperative shafts of his enemies. He was accused of having written, under Napoleon, a eulogy of despotism, and of having voted, on the return of the Bourbons, the death of Marshal Ney. Lord Palmerston, alarmed at the apparent tendency to withdraw from the pact existing between the two countries, and to secede from the Liberal programme, warned the French Premier of the consequences which must attend such a policy.[3] But in ordering new elections M. Molé was above all desirous of attracting what may be termed the conservative element to his banner, men antagonistic to both M. Guizot and M. Thiers.[4] The result at the polls was to prove a deception. The Ministerial Party found itself in the same predicament, having gained nothing numerically, and perhaps even lost in prestige by the fruitless tactics now so apparent to its foes.

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[1] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 121.

[2] Cf. Lord Normandy, *Journal of a Year of Revolution*, vol. I, p. 284.

[3] Cf. Bulwer, *Life of Palmerston*, vol. II, pp. 210–17.

[4] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 213.

Lamartine was himself confronted by a delicate and difficult situation which caused him considerable embarrassment. "I am offered fifteen or twenty constituencies," he wrote M. Dubois, at Mâcon, previous to the issue of the decree of dissolution. "Deputies follow each other begging me to accept, here and there, the certainties they offer. Two circumscriptions in Paris have sent me deputations, and I await another at noon to-day; but I can neither accept nor refuse nor talk about it on account of Mâcon."[1] Flattered as he must have been by the evidence of the trust reposed in him, his preferences naturally turned towards a representation in his native province. Cluny, one of the electoral districts of Mâcon, and within a stone's throw of Saint-Point, tempted him most. "Cluny. . . . Voilà ma vraie patrie politique," he confided to M. Dubois, "ma place naturelle et solide." Although gratitude towards the faithful Flemish electors at Bergues prompted fidelity to the distant town which had been the first to further his political ambitions, the triumph of what he calls "la démagogie sale",[2] in the recent local elections both there and at Mâcon was causing him considerable apprehension. Mâcon, he considered, had been particularly harsh in its treatment of him in municipal affairs, preferring a "noisy locksmith" to their distinguished fellow-citizen. Sadly he enumerates to Virieu the sacrifices, both of money and of dignity, he has made for his native town. "I have built roads at my own expense for forty thousand francs; I gave two thousand francs during the cholera outbreak. This year I gave twenty-five thousand francs' worth of books to the Town Library, etc., etc. I walked at the head of the procession of the Garde Nationale, etc., etc., etc."[3] But the parliamentary elections were still far off, and he hoped by a long residence in the district to win back local supporters.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCLI. [2] *Ibid.*, DCLIV. [3] *Ibid.*, DCLIV.

By the end of June he settled down at the Château of Monceau as more convenient for the canvassing in Mâcon, and devoted himself energetically to the furtherance of his candidacy.

M. de Virieu had remained a steadfast Legitimist, and, himself holding aloof from all participation in public affairs, severely criticized his friend's attitude towards the existing régime. Unfortunately the letters from Virieu to Lamartine have been lost or destroyed, but those of the poet-statesman to his friend afford significant glimpses of Lamartine's confidential sentiments concerning the eventual outcome of a policy he considered not only unpatriotic, but essentially detrimental to the interests of the party to which his friend adhered with unswerving fidelity. He could discern no door except that opened by anarchy through which a Restoration might conceivably enter, since the Legitimists, instead of transforming themselves into conservatives, and reconquering the moral administration of the country by virtue of a solidarity of order and interests, had assumed the attitude of *great political agitators* constituting a live menace to the interests of order. If they succeeded in awakening anarchy, he maintained, not only would they as a party perish, and established interests with them, but the anarchy they had themselves provoked could be crushed only by a military dictatorship or a foreign invasion. Their only chance after the Revolution of July was to assimilate their interests with those of the Nation: to ignore the Government, if they liked, but never the country at large.[1]

In this same letter there appear evidences of the faith which Lamartine persistently entertained that he was to play a great rôle in the political destinies of France. If he had assiduously cultivated the great gifts he possessed it was with this object continually in view. Within the last three years he had made giant strides; he considered himself now perfectly capable of taking his seat on the Ministerial benches and successfully upholding in debate the policy he advocated. "Je pense que la Providence qui m'a permis d'acquérir l'instrument me donnera un jour l'ouvrage; mais quand, comment, à quelle heure, pour quelle idée? Je ne l'entrevois pas." The old parties were dead; their resurrection was impossible: the future was uncertain, for France knew not what she desired. With his hand on the Nation's pulse, however, Lamartine never doubted but that his hour must come; and that to him his countrymen would turn to save them from the horrors of anarchy and social annihilation. This was not the mere presumptuous vanity of a genius who considered himself indispensable to the salvation of the country. It was founded on the conviction that to Democracy belonged the future of France, and that to the man who realized this fact, and was able to take advantage of the opportunities offered, must belong the honour of guiding the ship of State through the perilous cataracts destined to sweep away the old order which the Revolution of 1789 had irremediably undermined.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCLVII.

His objection to the conversion of the public funds was based on the premise that by lowering the rate of interest on National bonds the great landowners and capitalists would be indirectly favoured at the expense of those possessing small holdings. The true prosperity of the country depended, he continued, on the economic axiom of the progressive increase of small landholders, and the remunerative investment of small savings in national rentes. Privileges, of whatsoever nature they might be, were abhorrent to his ideas of equity. "Aristocratie des sentiments, des idées, des traditions, certes oui!" he admitted. "Aristocratie des lois et des propriétés excluant inévitablement les autres, jamais! Égalité et Justice sont un seul mot: or Justice et Dieu c'est un seul mot encore. Donc démocratie libre de la propriété." [1] Unlike many a theorist, he practised what he preached. Himself a large landowner he systematically facilitated and encouraged, sometimes at immense personal pecuniary sacrifice, the economic development of the small holdings which depended on him, or looked to him for support.

He was no financier, although he considered himself a capable man of business. His passion for land and the irresistible temptation to increase his estates continually were already embarrassing him and were to prove his financial undoing. "I have bought too much, and kept too large a portion of my family holdings," he confided to Virieu in 1837.[2] He had sunk enormous capital with the assurance of proportionally large returns in the vineyards at Monceau and elsewhere, and built new farms at Saint-Point on which he counted for increased revenues. But even now he realized that retrenchment for five or six years would be necessary, and anticipated forced sales as a possible eventuality. Nevertheless, with his habitual optimism he counted on the coming vintage to extricate him at least partially from his difficulties, and the mirage of the Monceau wine-crops assumed fantastic proportions.

But the scarcity of ready money could not be ignored, and his pen was set to work to supplement the insufficient income the soil yielded. "J'écris des vers tous les matins à la bougie pour gagner mon pain quotidien," he writes Virieu in October, 1837.[3] Nor was the pecuniary profit thus derived a negligible quantity in his domestic budget. His publishers advanced large sums on the mere promise of manuscript, certain as they were of their ability to recoup the outlay by the enormous sales his ever-increasing popularity commanded.[1] But his needs were insatiable, and the cost of his Paris establishment, and the thousand and one incidental expenses of his political life, added to the pecuniary embarrassments which were to end in irretrievable financial ruin.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCLIX. [2] *Ibid.*, DCLVIII. [3] *Ibid.*, DCLIX.

Meanwhile the elections, fixed, as has been said, for November 4, occupied all his energies. Mâcon offered him an almost certain victory in either of the two districts, *intra* and *extra muros*, the constituency boasted of. For reasons it is difficult to define Lamartine insisted, before yielding the equally certain seat at Bergues, that he should be given the assurance of a majority in *both* electoral colleges.[2] This apparently unreasonable presumption met with scant approval in Ministerial and administrative circles, as it opened the door of the Chamber to a candidate professing Republican principles. Lamartine himself asserts that his sympathies were with M. de la Charme, the Ministerial favourite and a personal friend.[3] But his actions do not uphold this contention, although in a letter to M. de Barthélemy he states that he will support M. de la Charme in recognition of the sixty votes this gentleman's friends recently cast in his own favour. At the same time he emphasized the fact that he would not permit the use of his name in any polemics hostile to M. Mathieu, assuring his correspondent that he would publicly deny any such utterances attributed to him.[4] This appeared suspiciously akin to hedging for popularity and prompted the indignant Prefect to an expression of the belief that the success of the Republican was in no wise displeasing to Lamartine. The incident, although insufficiently authenticated, is perhaps significant as a straw pointing to the direction Lamartine's political sympathies were following. It has, moreover, further importance as demonstrating the influence Lamartine exercised in M. Molé's administration, since the Prefect himself acknowledges that, distasteful as was this double candidacy of Lamartine's to the Government, he received instructions from headquarters to further the poet's ambitions to the best of his powers.

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[1] Lamartine is unjust when he accuses his publishers of extortion. Cf. letter to Madame de Girardin, *Correspondance*, DCLXXXIII.

[2] *Souvenirs d'un ancien Préfet*, p. 206.

[3] *Correspondance*, DCLX: "Je vais . . . recruter pour Lacharme, mais son absence et son inertie nous tuent inévitablement."

[4] *Souvenirs d'un ancien Préfet*, p. 210.

The victory he had achieved was, indeed, calculated to elate the reformer whose boast it was that he owed no allegiance to any political party; who walked alone, and loudly proclaimed his independence, refusing to give pledges which might embarrass his liberty of action. Well might he write triumphantly to Virieu, on November 6, 1837: "I was nominated here yesterday deputy for Mâcon, and half an hour later, deputy for Cluny (*extra muros*), by the two electoral colleges of the district, all at the same moment, in the same town, and in the same spirit. In addition I am nominated unanimously at Dunkirk (Bergues), and I refused two other prefectly certain nominations: that of Dunkirk-town and Lonhaus." [1] This was, indeed, a flattering tribute to the success of his policy, in more senses than one. It has been shown how he previously disapproved the attitude assumed by the Legitimist party since the establishment of the July Monarchy. On the present occasion he is able to inform Virieu, that, in so far as his own district was concerned, the Legitimists "behaved divinely under his direction, acting with loyalty, political acumen, and wisdom." Feeble, even compromising, as their assistance must have been, it could not be despised, for Mâcon was in the grip of demagogues who looked with only moderate confidence on the Ministerial candidate whom in 1834 they had thrown out by an overwhelming majority (226 against 98).[1] Lamartine manifestly exaggerates when he tells Virieu that in his native province "on m'a fait violence. J'ai été nommé en disant: 'Non ne me nommez pas.'" [2] The fight was a hard one in the two districts of Mâcon. Both his antagonists were men of advanced opinions, of even revolutionary tendencies.[3]

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCLXII.

Writing to explain why he had not chosen Bergues, where his election had been unanimous, Lamartine tells M. Debuyser: "Si j'opte pour Bergues, je mets deux républicains à la Chambre." But it would appear that in this instance, sincerely desirous though he was that moderate conservative principles should prevail, he placed personal considerations before political interests. The temptation to represent in the Chamber the district with which his family had for generations been prominently associated was one which he could with difficulty have withstood. Sentimentally his real political domicile was Mâcon and its environs. As he wrote Madame de Girardin: "Mon abdication de Dunkerque est pour moi une affaire de cœur." [4] An affair of the heart in two senses; for while eager to occupy the place at home he felt was his by right, his heart was heavy at wounding the faithful electors in the North, whose reproaches of ingratitude he apprehended. "Il ne faut pas blesser des amis politiques qui nous ont adopté et caressé quatre ans. Je veux leur ménager une transition, pénible pour moi."

As a matter of fact he succeeded very effectually in wounding deeply these same constituents in the distant northern province. Unanimously elected at Bergues on November 5, 1837, it was only on January 12 of the following year that he announced to the Chamber his choice of Mâcon (town), and the same day wrote to acquaint his agent in the North of his decision. The shilly-shally of this proceeding would seem unpardonable. On November 20, 1837, M. Randouin, sous-préfet of Dunkirk, had written reproaching him with his neglect. "You have no idea, Sir, of the painful impression made in the country by reason of your long silence and by the doubt which has been aroused as to your option. . . ." M. de Coppens, Lamartine's brother-in-law, in vain sought to reassure the aggrieved electors, stating that, in spite of appearances, and the fact that their candidate had not even acknowledged the receipt of the official communication acquainting him of his unanimous reëlection, a satisfactory explanation would be forthcoming. A circular had, indeed, been received in which Lamartine notified his electors that he would shortly visit them in order to express his gratitude for the honour they had done him. But its contents were vague, and gave no assurance of his intention to accept or refuse the seat they offered. For this reason the sous-préfet gives the following significant hint: "If you come to take your place at the head of your political family, your option in your hand, you will be received with open arms, and in two words you can dispel all this smoke; but if, which God forbid! you decide to break with Bergues, I think you would do wisely to postpone your visit to these same electors you have thrice found faithful, and who have progressively increased their confidence in you, and who have now sanctified it by conferring upon you, in spite of deep dissensions, the unanimity of their suffrages, and who would find their constancy repaid only by a humiliating divorce. . . ." And he finishes with the further warning: "À Mâcon, votre retraite n'exciterait que des regrets, sans reproches, il n'en serait pas de même à Bergues." [1]

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[1] *Souvenirs d'un ancien Préfet*, p. 208.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCLXII.

[3] Cf. Lamartine's letter to Debuyser cited by H. Cochin, *op. cit.*, p. 381.

[4] *Correspondance*, DCLXIII.

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[1] Letter cited by H. Cochin, *op. cit.*, p. 422.

Yet in spite of the resentment felt, a year later, on the dissolution of the Chamber, advances were again made to their former deputy, and Lamartine did not hesitate to solicit afresh the confidence of the faithful upholders of his policy in the circumscription of Bergues. Although acknowledging that other departments had offered him a seat, Lamartine protested his fidelity to the electors who first facilitated his entrance into public life; adding that were he not sincere in his desire to accept their offer, he would never have permitted himself to solicit their suffrages. But the spell was broken. Never again was Lamartine to represent another district than that of Mâcon.

Count Molé's expectations, that by an appeal to the country the coalition formed against him would be broken up, proved fallacious. The session of the new Parliament opened on December 18, 1837, and it immediately became evident that, far from strengthening his position, M. Molé had lost prestige. M. Thiers appeared determined to overthrow the Ministry he had upheld during the previous session, joining hands with the Left in his attacks against the personal influence of the King.[1] The unconstitutional and excessive share Louis-Philippe was charged with having arrogated in the affairs of the State was resented by a large majority composed of widely differing political parties. Thiers was resolved to unite these elements for the purpose of enforcing the maxim that "the King reigns but does not govern," and to defend parliamentary prerogatives against the encroachment of the pretensions of the Crown.[2] This offensive alliance, celebrated in the history of the period under the name of "Coalition," gathered under its banner leading members of political parties between which it was difficult to understand sympathetic action. Doctrinaires such as M. de Rémusat, and Guizot himself, and Duvergier de Hauranne (later the soul of the movement) allowed themselves to be persuaded by the eloquence of Thiers and Berryer.

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[1] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 219.

[2] Cf. Louis Blanc, *Histoire de Dix Ans*, vol. v, p. 267.

Lamartine was early at his post, and although at first he took little direct part in the stormy debates, the weight of his influence was soon to be thrown in support of Molé. In the elections for the Presidency of the Chamber he received twenty-nine votes, and, although defeated, this evidence of his growing popularity considerably elated him. Communicating the fact to Virieu he exclaimed: "J'ai donc trente hommes à moi à présent dans la Chambre, des 'socialistes.'"[1] And he adds: "The pure Royalists are lost: they appeal to me, but I energetically refuse: their colour would absorb my hue."[2] Lamartine had little personal sympathy for Louis-Philippe, it is true, but he had infinitely less for the leaders of the Coalition. Guizot represented to his eyes the incarnation of Protestantism, a form of religious creed he had from the cradle been taught to abhor.[3] Thiers he detested hardly less, for Thiers had frequently ridiculed him as a "poet" and "utopian," both in the Chamber and in the press. For Count Molé, on the contrary, he entertained the highest personal regard, although not in complete accord with his policies. It has been asserted that in combating the Coalition, Lamartine was actuated by sentiments of political jealousy. In a word, that the movement stole a march on him, occupying positions on which he had hoped to establish himself. We know that he sought an alliance between Right and Left in hope of a common conservative and reformatory action. The Coalition realized the same aim of political union, but to the profit of a destructive and almost revolutionary Opposition, seeking to impose on country and Crown alike a selfish parliamentary tyranny, in which Thiers would fill the rôle of a Napoleon of the rostrum, or a Cromwell.[1] It was the chiefs, and not altogether the fundamental principles of the Coalition, which were distasteful to Lamartine. Again, in upholding Molé, he rid himself in the eyes of public opinion from the supposed Legitimist aspirations which, in spite of all his previous efforts, he was accused of entertaining, while he proved to the Orléanists that he was not an irreconcilable foe to the existing régime. Could he detach the followers of Guizot and Thiers by proving to them the dangers to society their action entailed, and at the same time enrol the elements faithful to Molé under the banner of Reform, the ambition he had caressed from the outset of his political life (the formation of a party acknowledging his leadership) might be realized, and an opportunity might thus be afforded to put in practice the principles of the "Politique rationnelle."

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[1] He includes himself in this number. It should be remembered that the term "socialist" had a very different meaning in 1837 from what it has to-day.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCLXVI.

[3] Cf. Jean des Cognets, *La Vie intérieure de Lamartine*, p. 296.

Dargaud had discussed the situation very minutely with Lamartine. This "alter ego" of the poet-philosopher was himself no irreconcilable antagonist to the July Monarchy, and counted many friends amongst the Orléanists.[2] It is not improbable that he would have welcomed a political *rapprochement* with the dynasty in power, which would pave the way to his friend's accession to ministerial honours. Louis-Philippe, if not openly hostile, was deeply aggrieved by Lamartine's refusal to ally himself with the destinies of the Orléanists. On the other hand, Lamartine, as we know, entertained no personal animosity towards a family which had shown his mother and grandparents kindness and generosity. "You know," he wrote M. de Latour in 1836, "that, politics entirely aside, these recollections and the gratitude flowing from them form a heritage which I cannot ignore. I should indeed be grieved if my sentiments were mistaken where you are. Do me the favour to correct such impressions whenever you hear them expressed. They have nothing in common with my parliamentary action." [1]

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[1] Cf. Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 299.

But Louis-Philippe, while respecting the scruples which had dictated Lamartine's resignation from the diplomatic service after the Revolution of 1830, could neither forgive nor overlook the humiliating aloofness which the deputy affected even when supporting policies favourable to the maintenance of the throne. "If ever M. de Lamartine is his Minister," wrote Cuvillier-Fleury to the Duc d'Aumale, "it will be an absolute proof that the King was not free to choose." [2] Did Lamartine, when upholding a Ministry so dear to the Crown as that over which Count Molé presided, hope to disarm the personal antagonism of the King? While it would be rash to dismiss such a hypothesis as entirely groundless, there would hardly appear to be sufficient foundation for its unconditional acceptance. It is certain, however, that Lamartine was convinced in his own mind that his election as Count Molé's successor, much as such a choice might displease Louis-Philippe, would be made necessary in view of the parliamentary situation created by the fall of the Ministry. Dargaud affirms that such an eventuality was by no means improbable,[3] and M. René Doumic has recently (1908) published a letter from Lamartine to M. de Montherot, which lends substance to the contention. "My parliamentary position is becoming infinitely greater. I gauge it by the tireless efforts all parties make to enrol me *at any price*. There is nothing that one or the other has not offered me." But he adds: "Before I would be willing to assume power, circumstances must be such as to guarantee me a perfectly clear field. . . . It is necessary that the 'Question of July,' a question of honour for us, be buried a hundred feet under ground, and be so entirely obliterated that we no longer give it a thought." [1]

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCXXXI. M. de Latour was tutor to the Duc de Montpensier, and a close friend of the royal family.

[2] Letter cited by Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

[3] Cf. Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

At the outset of his campaign against the leaders of the Coalition, Lamartine traversed a period of bitter discouragement. Not that faith in his own powers was lacking; but he despaired of impressing his colleagues with a sense of the forces he held in reserve. "I am neither understood nor heeded by them," he complains to Virieu, "and I do not exercise the natural ascendancy proportionate to the effort I expend. Yet, there is within me such invincible impulsion, that I strive continually while often failing. It is very painful; for I am like a man speaking a strange language to foreigners, and who consumes his energies only to be misunderstood." [2]

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[1] *Revue des Deux Mondes*, September 15, 1908. "Mais il faut pour cela que la question de Juillet, question d'honneur pour nous, soit foulée à cent pieds sous terre, et tellement disparue qu'on n'y pense plus."

[2] *Correspondance*, DCLXVII.

CHAPTER XXXIV

AN ECLECTIC IN POLITICS

INTENSELY active as were his pursuits at this period (1837), Lamartine was conscious, at times painfully conscious, of "a something personal" lacking to fill his life, and make it really worth living. "It is all philosophy, religion, politics, poetry, business, tactics, wind, and words," he confided to Virieu.[1] Was it the void of his domestic hearth he lamented? The loss of his daughter Julia had deeply affected him; yet there would appear reason for the belief that even had the child lived, she could not have altogether filled the cravings his words denote.

Rarely has a wife taken a more important place in her husband's daily occupations than did Madame de Lamartine. But communion of spirit, that intangible bond which closely cements beings of widely dissimilar intellectual calibre, was absent.[2] "J'aurai une véritable perfection morale," the youthful suitor had confided to the Marquise de Raigecourt, eighteen years before; but he had betrayed the lukewarmness of his feelings when he added: "Je tâche de me rendre le plus amoureux possible." [3]

Passion he never pretended to have experienced for Miss Birch, and although no shadow of conjugal infidelity darkens his married life, the memories of Madame Charles were never to be effaced. Political ambitions might absorb him, the struggle against impending financial disaster now harass, now spur him on to fresh literary endeavour,[1] yet the gnawing emptiness of heart could not be silenced. The blame, if blame there was, could assuredly not be laid at the devoted wife's door. Unlike the English consort of Lamartine's compatriot and friend, Alfred de Vigny, Miss Birch had merged her individuality with the racial peculiarities of the husband of her choice.[2] That she was unable to supplant the associations of a buried past is no proof of a lack of adaptability to the psychic conditions she was called upon to face.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCLXVI.

[2] Cf. Madame Ollivier, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

[3] *Correspondance*, CCXVII.

Whatever Lamartine's latent spiritual unrest, whatever the secret causes of his moral discontent, he threw himself unreservedly into the vortex of public duties, determined to lay the ghosts of past memories by an ever-increasing application to the humanitarian aims he had in view. When he espoused Count Molé's interests in the fight against the Coalition which sought the destruction of the Ministry of Conciliation formed on April 15, 1837, he entered the lists with open visor, loudly proclaiming himself the champion of the menaced Government, yet equally emphatically protesting his personal independence of the Crown or the Cabinet. "Dès que j'eus pris pied sur ce terrain solide quoique mobile, je sentis mes forces doublées." Lamartine believed that, although the Ministers feared him and realized the temporary character of the support he gave them, they knew that but for his aid they must fall. Louis-Philippe greatly appreciated, we are told, this unexpected succour which Providence sent him. "What will you do for Lamartine?" the King was asked by M. Fulchiron. "What Ministry will you offer him in recognition of his services and in order to encourage his allegiance?" "Lamartine is not a Minister," replied the King; "Lamartine is in himself a whole Cabinet! . . . I hold him in reserve for the unknown days of supreme peril." [1] But although Lamartine was determined never to serve personally a sovereign who had usurped the rights of another, he was equally resolved to uphold the institutions the country had of its own free will adopted, and to defend the constitutional prerogative of the Crown to select Ministers who shared equally the responsibilities assumed by the Throne.[2] This was to be the basis of the support he lent Count Molé, and from this fundamental principle he never departed by a hair's breadth during the long fight against the seditious tactics employed by Thiers and Guizot, who sought to undermine the authority of the sovereign they had welcomed to the throne.

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[1] "I struggle painfully for a living," he wrote Virieu at the end of 1837: "I am seeking a new arrangement with a publisher which will give me 100,000 francs and help me to exist four more years." (*Correspondance*, DCLXVI.)

[2] It will be remembered that the French poet, De Vigny, married Lydia Bunbury. In his *Journal d'un Poète*, Vigny wrote (1844): "Les efforts surnaturels que feraient des Français pour établir quelque chaleur, quelque mouvement dans les conversations entre eux, Français, et des Anglais et Anglaises seraient toujours perdus. *C'est jouer de l'archet sur une pierre.* Ce qui manque absolument à la race anglaise, c'est précisément ce qui fait le fond de notre caractère, la gaîté dans l'imagination, le mouvement dans le sentiment." (Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 171.)

That Lamartine's estimate of the services rendered the Crown during the struggle which terminated in the victory of the Coalition is exaggerated, there would appear little doubt. He could not save the colourless Molé Ministry; and subsequent events proved that, loyal as he was in his support of the prerogatives of the Crown, the fate of the dynasty itself gave him but slight concern. But his influence with the Chamber during those stormy debates was undeniable. M. Thureau-Dangin, the great historian of the July Monarchy, a critic systematically hostile to Lamartine, writes as follows of his entrance into the fray: "All the great orators were on the side of the Opposition; a single one had offered to the Ministerials an aid immediately accepted with gratitude; it was Lamartine.

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. I, p. 335.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 338.

Till now isolated, lost, as it were, in the political world into which he had wandered after 1830, his opinions constantly buffeted by the winds of his imagination, at once generous and personal, he had dreamed of playing an immense rôle, and had not succeeded in filling even a secondary one. An opportunity was offered this ambitious man to assume at last the leadership of a party, the knight-poet saw the chance of using the golden sword of his eloquence in defence of the weak; Lamartine grasped it with alacrity, making it clear, however, that the combat over, he was free to follow his own path, to adopt other clients in need of aid, to seek fresh adventures." [1] True in its essence, this appreciation is perhaps not strictly exact in the conclusion it foreshadows. The sovereignty of his personal independence Lamartine was determined to preserve at all costs.

Yet his action was not as quixotic as might be implied by M. Thureau-Dangin's words. The chivalrous defence of a weak Government was a mere incidental consideration with him: he discerned in the course the leaders of the Coalition were pursuing revolutionary tendencies calculated to plunge the country once again in the throes of civil strife. The conciliation of the warring political factions he honestly believed might be achieved by the party in power under *his* guidance. The elements were good. "Tu peux planter et bâtir tant que le pays aura cette Chambre," he optimistically wrote Virieu on January 13, 1838. And he assures his friend that if between the Republic and the present régime there is a ditch to be crossed, before Legitimist restoration could be effected there loomed the Republic and an abyss.[2] This, the most ardent Legitimist would hesitate to face.

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[1] *Histoire de la monarchie de Juillet*, vol. III, p. 322; cf. also Doumic, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, September 15, 1908, who agrees in substance.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCLXVII.

The two armies arraigned against each other comprised practically all the elements of the Chamber. Alone the Republicans of the Extreme Left, and the Legitimists who occupied the benches of the Extreme Right, held aloof, although, antagonistic as they both were to the existing form of government, their sympathy inclined rather to the Coalitionists. Lamartine had as yet not openly embraced M. Molé's course, and as a consequence his influence was sought on all sides. Flattered as he could not help but be by the recognition of his worth, he was more than ever determined to follow unswervingly the line of action he had distinctly set down. Evidences of this fidelity to his personal independence are everywhere apparent. "Je suis très ministériel pour M. Molé," he wrote Léon de Pierreclos,[1] in April, "mais je lui ai déclaré que, depuis une épingle jusqu'à un ministère, je n'accepterais rien. Dites bien cela à mon père pour qu'il ne croie pas à ces bruits que la Chambre croit tout à fait." [2]

A few days later, however, in reply to a question of Virieu's as to how he would act under certain conditions, Lamartine outlines very faithfully the course he followed ten years later, when the possibilities he foresaw became realities. If conscientiously convinced, he averred, that he could serve at once his country and his personal ideals, and that *he alone* could save the situation, he would not hesitate to participate with the Government under any flag whatsoever. But before accepting such a task he would require the evidence of God and man of the irresistible necessity for such action.[3] Again and again he makes it apparent that he believes himself specially designated by Providence to fill the rôle of saviour of society in the great crisis he felt must inevitably occur; and his whole parliamentary career is planned with this object in view. Opposed as he was to the reigning dynasty, it appears at first sight inconsistent on Lamartine's part to support a policy which aimed at the maintenance of royal prerogatives he considered usurped. If throw his weight in the scales he must, the Coalitionist camp seemed to offer advantages far greater than fidelity to Molé could pretend to furnish. Selfish and personally interested as such leaders as Guizot and Thiers might be, they could hardly be classed as revolutionists in the ordinary acceptation of the term. "L'anarchie est entrée avec vous dans cette Chambre, elle n'en sortira qu'avec vous," roared Guizot in the face of Molé during the session of January 7 (1838), and blasting the servile attitude of the Minister towards the pretensions of the Crown, the furious orator applied to him the condemnation of Tacitus, "*omnia serviliter pro dominatione.*" To which Molé coldly and bitingly remarked that Tacitus had hurled the reproach not at "*courtisans*," but at those possessed of overweening ambition. The barb rankled, for the personal animosity towards Louis-Philippe, which found expression in the claims of the Coalitionists, was due to the humiliated personal ambitions of leaders who resented any show of independence on the part of their royal protégé.

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[1] Concerning Lamartine's relationship to Léon de Pierreclos, M. Louis Barthou has published (*Revue de Paris*, March 1, 1912) a very curious collection of private letters from which he draws conclusions, often suspected, but never clearly established. Cf. "En marge des 'Confidences.'" That Lamartine practically adopted this young man, who died in 1841, is known. After his death Lamartine considered the young widow as his adopted daughter. The question is of too delicate a nature to pronounce judgment here.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCLXIII.

[3] *Ibid.*, DCLXXIV; cf. also DCXXXVI.

That Lamartine could have no sympathy with a movement that was based on the principle of personal aggrandizement is quite comprehensible; but it is less clear why he embraced so vigorously the defence of a Ministry inclined to attribute to the Crown rather more extended prerogatives than the most liberal interpretation of the Constitution called for. Gratitude for the promulgation of the amnesty which Molé offered as an earnest of his desire for the cessation of sterile political strife, undoubtedly weighed heavily in favour of the Ministry of Conciliation.[1]

Yet this was not sufficient for the abandonment of the policy of isolation he had made his own. In spite of his vigorous disclaimer, Lamartine must inevitably become associated in the public mind with the principles for which Count Molé gave battle: consequently the loss, or tarnishing, of what he proudly termed his "*puritanisme d'indépendance*," was a consideration of importance to one holding the eclectic political position he clung to. This being the case, it would appear that he had little to gain and much to lose in acting as he did. It has been frequently advanced that the fundamental policy formulated in the "Politique rationnelle," vague and hazy in expression as it was, constituted the key-note of the author's political conduct throughout his career. This is undoubtedly so in the main. But a careful study of his actions and motives in the present instance would seem to indicate a temporary departure from the strict line of conduct that a philosophical treatise prescribed. Circumstances alter cases: no human being can control or guide the vital forces which swell and surge around us. Every practical politician knows that an unvarying adherence to the letter of a personal ideal is often not only impolitic, but impossible. Throughout his life Lamartine was unflinchingly faithful to the spirit of his political ideals.

But this is begging the question. Why did Lamartine decide for Molé rather than for the Coalition? Let us first glance at the alternatives offered him (momentarily setting aside that of the "splendid isolation" he had hitherto maintained). Had Lamartine joined forces with the Coalition, there is little doubt that the fall of the July Monarchy would have been hastened by nearly a decade. Realizing the seditious tendencies of the principles which actuated the Coalitionists, did not Lamartine hesitate to face the responsibilities which must be assumed? It will be objected that a few years later he recognized the same peril, and yet himself contributed, perhaps more than any single individual, towards precipitating the crisis. This is true; but as with the metaphysical, so with the political, a sharp and clear decision was well-nigh an impossibility to him. How often in his private correspondence do we hear him pleading that the cup may not be presented to him! A decision in the present instance meant facing the Unknown. As in his theological discussions with Dargaud, he dreaded taking a step calculated to compromise a programme the realization of which necessitated patient elaboration, and not the seizure of fortuitous circumstance. On the other hand, Count Molé's victory meant added life and strength to the Monarchy founded on a usurpation. Distasteful as this eventuality undoubtedly was, its acceptance seemed inevitable. Despairing of the Legitimist cause, convinced that France was not yet ripe for Republicanism, yet ever furthering the claims of Democracy, it seems probable that Lamartine (in 1839) recognized the existing régime as the only one affording reasonable guarantees for the political stability requisite for the upbuilding of the social reformation he had at heart. "J'ai l'instinct des masses," he repeated on several occasions. But the organization of the masses, if the excesses of the inevitable revolution he foresaw were to be avoided, demanded careful training for the liberties he was determined they should enjoy. Perhaps also personal ambition — in its most legitimate form, however — was not altogether foreign to his support of Molé. His own words justify the assertion that his confidence in Molé's statesmanship was not unlimited.[1]

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. I, p. 334.

Without aspiring to take the Premier's place, he might assume that his own personal influence with a Ministry he had saved from annihilation would be paramount. The "splendid isolation," to which reference has been made, had become irksome [2] in spite of the manifold advantages it presented amidst the confusion of parties. But he could not hope to act alone: the coöperation of men prepared to adopt, and aid him to carry out, the policies he had matured, was a *sine qua non* for the fruition of his awaited triumph. Molé had insisted on the passage of the Amnesty Bill: it was possible that further social reforms might be achieved through the same medium. The ostensible grounds for the opening of hostilities were the amended paragraphs of the Address affecting the foreign and domestic policies of the Government. But the discussion rapidly degenerated into a series of individual impeachments, accusing the Ministry in power of abuse of constitutional prerogatives — accusations clearly demonstrating the personal jealousies and ambitions of the leaders of the Coalition. For twelve long days the conflict raged without respite. The heterogeneous composition of the Coalition added to the confusion of the debate, which for violent vituperation has rarely been equalled in parliamentary history. Again and again the principles at stake were entirely lost sight of in the fury of personal abuse and wholesale condemnation hurled against the Ministry.

Contrary to expectations Count Molé rose to the occasion and proved himself equal to the titanic task which confronted him. Practically alone in his defence of the Government, he welcomed with inexpressible relief the advent of Lamartine, who lost no time in plunging into the midst of the mêlée.[1]

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. I, p. 333.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCLXVII; letter to Virieu, January 13, 1838.

After a struggle with M. Thiers, who insisted on interrupting his speech in spite of reiterated refusals by the President to allow him the floor, Lamartine unequivocally attacked the Coalition, scathingly denouncing the anarchy resultant from their unprincipled tactics. "No, we shall not vote your Address," he thundered. "Why? Simply because it is your Address; because it is unconstitutional, and seeks to dislodge a Cabinet you are more than any others unfit to replace." [2] Accusing the leaders of the Coalition of attempting to break down authority, lower the prestige of the rostrum, and degrade the principle of representative government, the speaker nevertheless disclaims any intention of making himself "the defender or the panegyrist of any Cabinet." And forthwith he proceeds to qualify his adhesion to the Government's policy in Switzerland and Italy, of which, although recognizing the necessity, he laments the methods. But in spite of criticism, of certain personal reservations, Lamartine makes it very clear as to where his sympathies lie, and boldly announces his intention of supporting a Government of order against the unwarranted attacks of an incongruous association of interests, which can only lead to discredit and deception. Had the adversaries of the Cabinet offered a programme in conformity with the great principles of social progress which he advocates, Lamartine assures them they might have had his vote: but as the issue was merely one of personal antagonism to the members of the Cabinet, having in view no advantages for the country, his efforts will be directed towards the maintenance of the order and authority their action menaces. That Lamartine was sincere in his belief that Thiers and Guizot would stop at nothing for the achievement of their selfish interests is confirmed by his correspondence. Their aim, he believed, was to involve France in a war with Belgium, and stir up revolution at home for the furtherance of their own ends.[1] Whatever the plans of Thiers and Guizot may have been, they were certainly not prepared to go to such lengths as these. Nevertheless, their allies of the Extreme Left would scarcely have hesitated to dethrone Louis-Philippe at almost any cost,[2] for, as Lamartine had hinted in his speech of January 10 (1839), the "*marchés simoniaques*" existing between the heterogeneous components of the Coalition augured no good for the safety of the country. In his third speech against the amendment to the paragraph of the Address relative to the approval of the general foreign policy of the Government, Lamartine exposed the selfish ambitions of the leaders of the Coalition, whose policy, if accepted, must, in his estimation, endanger the peace, not only of France and Belgium, but of Europe.[3]

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[1] *Histoire de la monarchie de Juillet*, vol. III, p. 330.

[2] *La France parlementaire*, vol. II, p. 140.

In the course of this speech Lamartine let drop certain personal appreciations of the Constitutional Left, which, viewed in the light of previous and subsequent events, afford interesting evidence of the direction his political sympathies were following. Eight years earlier, Lamartine, the reputed Legitimist, had assured Dargaud, the advanced Liberal, that no deep abyss yawned between their political creeds.[4] Now, in the midst of the fierce struggle, he paused a moment to pay homage to the "great and generous love of liberty" professed by a party who sought — or pretended to seek — the overthrow of the Ministry he upheld. Yet he did not hesitate to laud their efforts for the development of liberal institutions, and to applaud the dignity of men who aspired to govern themselves by the aid of reason and untrammelled discussion, terminating his remarks with the assertion that he would not fear to see such a party in power, although he recognized the fact that as yet they did not enjoy the confidence necessary for a successful government.[1] We may well believe that such words created a sensation in the Chamber, and even displeased the party he sought to propitiate, for he made it clear that they had sold themselves, together with the principles they professed, to an "apparent majority." Nor had Molé reason to feel elated, for, as M. Thureau-Dangin very justly states, Lamartine by no means accepted unconditionally either the acts or the ideas of the Cabinet. "Il aimait à se poser en protecteur magnanime, parfois même un peu dédaigneux, plutôt qu'en partisan dévoué, et il attaquait la coalition plus qu'il ne défendit M. Molé." [2] Nevertheless, the assistance of even this half-hearted champion was deeply appreciated, the Centre and Ministerial benches enthusiastically welcoming an orator wielding the eloquence their party lacked. They knew full well that the denunciations of their spokesman were directed solely against the vulgar ambitions of a league blindly following a handful of selfish leaders, and that the support he lent them would melt like snow before an April sun should an Opposition be formed which conscientiously and fearlessly adopted social progress as its device.[3] Never for one moment did Lamartine believe that parliamentary prerogatives ran any risk of being dimmed by the arrogation by the Crown of the constitutional prerogatives it claimed. Such a pretext might serve to mask the tactics of the leaders of the Coalition, but, as Lamartine assured his hearers, the Crown was impotent to harm them, for its only resource lay in a *coup d'état*, that is to say, a crime; and they knew that such an act could not go three days unpunished.[1]

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[1] This he writes textually to Virieu; cf. *Correspondance*, DCLXXXIX.

[2] Letter from L. Faucher to M. H. Reeve cited by Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 339.

[3] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. II, p. 156.

[4] Jean des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

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[1] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. II, p. 160.

[2] *Histoire de la monarchie de Juillet*, vol. III, p. 330; cf. also Louis Blanc, *Histoire de Dix Ans*, vol. V, p. 351.

[3] Blanc, *op. cit.*, p. 351; cf. also *La France parlementaire*, vol. II, p. 150.

Lamartine's magnificent reply to M. Thiers's attack on the Molé Cabinet is virtually a synopsis of the principles proclaimed in the "Politique rationnelle." When, on January 10, 1839, the deputy from Mâcon gave utterance to those prophetic words: "La France est une nation qui s'ennuie. Et prenez y garde, l'ennui des peuples devient aisément convulsion et ruines"; when that warning was sounded sharply in the halls of Parliament and reëchoed throughout all the broad land of France, the death-knell of a dynasty forgetful of its popular origin was tolled.[2] Nine years were to elapse before the crash came; but the disintegration of the heterogeneous materials, which for eighteen years held the incongruous structure upright, had begun. "The sovereignty invested in a man, or the sovereignty invested in the country, is the great division of dogma which, in modern times, separates thinking men. My intelligence cannot admit the symbol of despotism or of the degradation of human dignity: my thought, my entire life, is devoted to the moral development of the principle of liberty. Whether this principle triumphs under a Republic or under that mixed form of government which is called the representative system, it matters but little: it is a mere question of time and custom. . . . I have no superstitious respect for any combination of powers, and the merit of monarchical constitutional government, in my eyes, is principally the fact that it exists, and is in more or less harmony with the necessities and the customs of an epoch of transition, when there is too ardent a longing for liberty to embrace the monarchical system, and too deep-rooted a habit of the monarchy to accept the Republic." [1] Surely such sentiments as these made clear the course the speaker was determined to follow! Nor could the significance of the following passage be misconstrued: "Eighteen-thirty knew neither how to create a line of action nor to find itself. You could not remake Legitimacy: the ruins of the Restoration were beneath your feet; you could not reëstablish military glory: the Empire had passed, and left you merely a column of bronze in a Paris square. The past was closed for you, you needed a new ideal. You were impotent to borrow from a dead past, I know not what remainder of vital warmth, insufficient at best to animate a government which looked to the future; you have deprived the country of progressive action. You must not believe, gentlemen, that, because we are weary of the great upheavals which have rocked the century and ourselves, others are weary and fear the slightest change. The generations which are rising up around us are not weary; they in turn demand action." [2] And the peroration terminates with the catching phrase already cited: "Messieurs, la France est une nation qui s'ennuie!"

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. II, p. 144.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 148.

To us it seems well-nigh incredible that words, apparently so insignificant, should produce, not only in France, but in Europe, the deep impression they undoubtedly did. Various interpretations have been vouchsafed; many ingenious, none convincing. M. de Mazade asks himself whether in this instance we should not substitute the name of Lamartine for that of his country. It was Lamartine who was bored by the comparative inaction imposed upon him. He yearned for a leading rôle in the political drama which was being enacted. He had aspired to the Presidency of the Chamber, a ministerial portfolio; and he was offered an embassy. Was it for these reasons he sought the suffrages of the extreme Oppositionists, "like a Coriolanus meditating vengeance"? [1] It is not probable. Whatever the opinion of historians may be concerning the part played by Lamartine in the battle against the Coalition, there is certainly no ground for a doubt that in his own estimation his rôle was predominant. "*C'est moi seul*, j'ose le dire, qui ai empêché la guerre de Belgique," [2] he wrote Virieu from Saint-Point after the dissolution which followed the sterile victory of Molé's Cabinet. Such a feat was well calculated to emancipate the man who had encompassed it from the lassitude of *ennui*. But his task was not finished. The preservation of the authority of the King in his councils, and the attainment of what he calls "a sincere majority" in the Chamber, accurately reflecting the spirit of the country, were objects still requiring ceaseless energy. Should these fail, the latent revolutionary sentiment of the masses, the prestige of military enterprises, must embroil France in inextricable complications; perhaps witness the accession of Henry V to a throne supported by foreign bayonets, steeped in the blood of thousands of patriotic Liberals. If France felt *ennui*, it was the *ennui* caused by disappointment; by the failure of a constitutional government, founded on the basis of popular liberties, to fulfil the promise of social reforms its birth had foreshadowed.

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. II, p. 143.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 148.

As Lamartine said in his speech of January 10 (1839), the Monarchy of July, born of the people, owed itself entirely to the people, devoting its energies to the interests of the greater number. The task begun in 1789 should have been continued, amplified, and perfected by the Government of 1830, not through the medium of revolutionary movements, but through legislation and the gradual application of the great principles of democracy and fraternity which Christianity had introduced.[1] But if France was restless — for *ennui* spells also annoyance, pain, and, by extension, discontent — the unrest was not merely the result of legislative inaction, or the insufficiency of the measures for social reform. A deep and growing resentment against the restrictions imposed by the treaties of 1815 was noticeable. "France is smothering within too narrow limits, disproportioned to her material forces and national influences," was the startling statement he made a few days later. "She does not occupy the place which should be hers in Europe. It is apparent, France feels it, and it would be prudent for Europe to understand it. The treaties of 1815 are a reaction against omnipotency, against the universal monarchy of Napoleon. They represent the heel of the conqueror on the throat of the vanquished. But, gentlemen, such a state of affairs cannot be permanent, and the oppression cannot be long endured when the sufferer is France!" [2] The revolt against the humiliations imposed by the Congress of Vienna dated from before 1830. The Restoration had instigated a reaction which Chateaubriand had endeavoured to enforce. Lamartine attributed to the anomalies of these diplomatic yokes the unsatisfactory conditions prevailing abroad and also at home, and saw in them the sources of the parliamentary difficulties with which they were even then contending. But it was manifestly unfair to hold Count Molé's Ministry accountable for a foreign policy which was a direct inheritance from their immediate predecessors, from a period when Thiers and Guizot had held the reins of government.

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[1] *Lamartine*, p. 98.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCXCIV.

Lamartine fretted no less than did many of his countrymen over the inglorious rôle assigned to France by the

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. II, p. 148.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

Powers assembled at Vienna. Yet, despite the menace implied by his words, nothing was farther from his thoughts than a resort to arms in order to break the fetters which hampered the expansion of French influences abroad. His intentions were essentially pacific. All he now asked was confidence in the Government which had the negotiations with Belgium in hand. The successful termination of this complicated enterprise necessitated the good-will of England, and Count Molé was accused by his enemies of having allowed the friendship with Great Britain to cool. If this were so, the reason was not far to seek: the material interests of England might be injured by the renascence of French diplomacy on the Continent. Lamartine gave two examples of alliances which, if concluded, must give umbrage to their neighbour across the Channel. Suppose France and Russia came to an agreement in the Orient, the price of the pact being the extension of the Czar's dominions to the Bosphorus, while France expanded her frontiers on the Rhine: the position of the allies in the Orient became predominant. On the other hand, should France and Austria conclude an alliance with the view of establishing an equilibrium of interests in this same Oriental question, they held the balance of European power in their united grasp, to the exclusion of English influence. Political harmony on the Continent, he contended, was detrimental to British interests; hence their difficulties in Belgium, which were the direct results of the imbroglio perfidious Albion had engineered. Molé's Cabinet represented peace; substitute one formed of the unstable elements of the Coalition, and the advantages offered by other diplomatic combinations were immediately destroyed, to the joy of those who sought to foster Continental dissensions.[1] Freedom of action was an imperative necessity for the moral and material development of the France Lamartine's patriotic ambitions pictured in the sisterhood of nations. With this object in view she must break one by one the links of the chain which fettered her; replacing the hampering treaties of 1815 with alliances more in accord with her dignity. Little as he would have approved an aggressive foreign policy in 1830, he felt the time was ripe for an abandonment of "the policy of genuflexions and the *amende honorable*" by which she had sought to have herself forgiven abroad for the revolution which had placed the younger branch of Bourbons upon the throne, together with the liberal constitutionalism the reigning dynasty incorporated. But such action must not involve the abuse of the power which was hers by right, and he earnestly deprecated a resort to violence in the present crisis in Belgium.[1]

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. II, p. 154.

Sentiments such as these, favouring, as they did, coöperative rather than independent party action, made a profound impression on the Chamber and were widely repeated abroad. "Chaque matin, ses discours de la veille bondissaient sur toutes les dalles du pavé de Paris," according to the picturesque phrase of an ardent admirer.[2]

For twelve days, as has been told, the battle raged unceasingly. Count Molé astonished friends and foes alike by his cool and able thrust and parry in the violent attacks directed against his person and his policy. Lamartine alone could be counted upon as an orator capable of facing such past-masters of the Tribune as Guizot, Thiers, Berryer, or Odilon Barrot.[3] Side by side these two statesmen, so dissimilar in their innermost convictions, struggled against the overwhelming tide of a coalition which both felt must, if successful, result in parliamentary anarchy and the demoralization of a discredited representative principle. The majorities obtained by the Government, as each paragraph of the Address was submitted to vote, were infinitesimal: that concerning the Cabinet's action in the Belgian imbroglio being but 216 to 212. But the vote on the *ensemble* of the foreign policy of the Government was lost to the Coalition by nine votes (219 to 210). Yet the Ministry held firm, and on the morrow a vote of censure, proposed by the committee charged with the framing of the amendments to the Address, was thrown out by 220 to 213. Lamartine's energy was tireless as the crisis approached. In the Chamber, in the committee-rooms, and in the various meetings, he spoke constantly and with impassioned eloquence in defence of an institution he had not approved, but which "covered three quarters of the interests of his country and of Europe." [1] When finally the debate was exhausted, and the Address as a whole (comprising the amendments the Cabinet had successively caused to be adopted) was voted upon, 221 deputies upheld the Government which 208 condemned.[2] The Ministry was victorious, it is true, but Count Molé fully realized the precarious position of the Government he represented.[3] Nor was Lamartine the dupe of the oratorical triumph he had achieved, although he was well aware of the immense value of the assistance he had lent the Government and the Crown in the hour of extremist peril. "The 221 deputies have begged me to be their leader," he wrote his ward, Léon de Pierreclos, on January 21; "I answered that I had allied myself with them solely with the provisional and determined purpose of preventing the triumph of the Coalition and the war with Belgium, and that this object achieved, I should reassume my independent convictions. Read this to my father and the family, and assure them that it is my firm resolution to accept no place in the reconstructed Cabinet. On all sides I am urged to do so; but I have my own part to play and do not wish to assume another unless compelled to yield to *force majeure* and an appeal from the country." [1]

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. II, p. 165.

[2] Quoted by Lady Margaret Domville, *Lamartine*, p. 199.

[3] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 341.

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[1] Cf. *Correspondance*, DCXCIV.

[2] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 340.

[3] Cf. Blanc, *Histoire de Dix Ans*, vol. V, p. 353; also Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 343.

Count Molé, three days after the uncertain victory, placed his resignation in the hands of Louis-Philippe, who refused it, preferring the dissolution of the Chamber and new elections under the auspices of his favourite Minister to the domination of M. Thiers and the chiefs of the Coalitionists. After a fruitless attempt to enlist Marshal Soult in a combination calculated to preserve and perhaps to strengthen Molé's position, the King signed (February 2, 1839) a decree dissolving the Chamber and fixing new elections for the 2d of the following month, and convoking Parliament for March 26. The fury of the Coalitionists knew no bounds. The King's action — an essentially constitutional one — was stigmatized as a *coup d'état*, and the battle, now resumed in the open, raged more fiercely than ever.[2] Lamartine strenuously opposed the decree of dissolution,[3] which Count Molé obtained from the King, unknown to his faithful henchman.[4] Alone among the deputies who had upheld the Ministry, Lamartine was summoned by Count Molé to a private meeting of the Cabinet in which the future action of the Government was discussed. Addressing his colleagues, Molé urged the necessity of an appeal to the country; a proposition unanimously accepted by all save Lamartine, who preferred to see the Cabinet exhaust all the constitutional expedients at its disposal before having recourse to a measure he felt convinced would prove disastrous. If we may believe Lamartine's version of this episode, it would appear that he convinced the members of the Cabinet of the error of such a step and, headed by M. de Montalivet, Minister of the Interior, one after another they retracted their former adhesion to their chief's proposal, and agreed with the outsider who had been admitted to their council.[1] Pale and visibly upset, M. Molé, turning to his colleagues, informed them that it was too late. "The decree of dissolution, signed by the King last night at my request, is even now on its way to the provinces."

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCLXXXVIII.

[2] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 346; also Blanc, *op. cit.*, p. 354.

[3] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. I, p. 343.

[4] *Correspondance*, DCXC.

It is certain that Louis-Philippe, much as he disliked under the peculiar circumstances the principle of a dissolution, recognized that therein lay his only chance of preserving a Minister to whom he was sincerely attached.[2] Nor did he stand alone in this opinion. Writing to M. Molé, on February 18, M. de Barante upholds the measure, declaring that it was absolutely inevitable, and that to enforce it in preference to having M. Thiers assume power "was a duty." Whatever his personal convictions might be, Lamartine loyally accepted the situation when he pleaded with the 221 deputies who remained faithful to the principles at stake, and of whom he considered himself *momentarily the leader;*[1] for he assured them that once the crisis was past, he would resume his independence. "The dissolution of the Chamber has just been announced to you," he said. "This is an extreme appeal which the Constitution makes to the country on extreme occasions. We are not called upon to judge concerning the necessity or the opportunism of this important measure: it is the exclusive privilege of the Executive. Were we to criticize it here we should be assuming the responsibility of the action. Let us leave such responsibility to those in whom the Constitution invests it."[2] And he continues to point out where their duty lies — in steadfast allegiance to the principles they have so valiantly defended against the unparalleled attacks of the Coalition. To keep the majority together, and instil the courage and confidence necessary for a continuance of the struggle when the Chamber reassembled, was the utmost he could hope for. None could foresee the result of the new elections: he himself was pessimistic as to the outcome; but his action, even should disaster overtake him, would leave his character unblemished and his reputation as an honest politician well established. That he looked for a personal victory during the coming elections can hardly be doubted, for he wrote Virieu before leaving Paris for Mâcon: "I shall found, with fifteen or twenty colleagues only, a new liberal and social Right Centre, destined one day to unite with the new Left and to modify it. There you have the whole secret of my manœuvre."[3] The democratic leanings of such a programme are apparent. To a reconstructed and purified Left could well be entrusted participation in the social reforms ever paramount in his mind when dealing with political combinations entailing party coöperation.

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[1] M. Deschanel, in his *Lamartine* (vol. II, p. 113), does not accept the dramatic version given in the *Mémoires politiques*, and the even fuller details of his account of the event in the *Cours de littérature*. According to the testimony of one of the most honourable Ministers present (whose name, however, M. Deschanel does not give) Lamartine's opinion was sought privately, and, accompanied by M. de Montalivet, he saw Count Molé at the latter's residence. "Je me rendis au rendezvous chez M. Molé. J'y trouvai les ministres réunis," Lamartine specifies in the *Cours de littérature* (vol. XII, p. 285). And again in the letter to Virieu dated February, 1839, he positively states: "J'ai été appelé *seul* et confidentiellement au Conseil où cela [the dissolution] a été résolu." (*Correspondance*, DCXC.) Failing documentary proof to the contrary, we are prepared to accept Lamartine's own version. Note that had he been invited to a *private* conference, he would have used the term "*en conseil*," and not "*au Conseil*," when writing a few days later to Virieu.

[2] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 344.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCXC; cf. also Deschanel, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 114.

[2] *La France parlementaire*, vol. II, p. 175.

[3] *Correspondance*, DCXC.

Reference has been made to Louis-Philippe's answer when asked why he did not entrust a ministerial portfolio to Lamartine: "M. de Lamartine is not a Minister, but a Ministry," the King replied. It would appear that the Sovereign on more than one occasion expressed the desire that the deputy who had defended so energetically the interests of the Orléans dynasty, should come secretly to the Tuileries in order to discuss the political situation. Lamartine in after years (1861) gave a circumstantial account of an interview he had with the King, who used all the persuasive eloquence he possessed to induce his elusive ally to recognize his dynasty openly.[1] Although no irrefutable documentary evidence exists concerning the episode, it is certainly admissible that Lamartine deferred to the royal invitation. Be this as it may, however, it is certain that the interview was productive of no appreciable change of heart on Lamartine's part towards the dynasty he invariably and openly considered as a *pis aller* — the stepping-stone to an era of political and social liberties wherein a *usurpation* could find no place.[2] The Coalition of 1839 shook the throne to its foundations. The parliamentary anarchy which ensued slowly permeated every stratum of the social fabric, gradually sapping the never solid foundations of the makeshift régime, which, in spite of its many really admirable qualities and virtues, was tainted from birth. There was sound prophetic philosophy in the words of the Republican De Cormenin (sentiments which might have been uttered by Lamartine himself): "La France veut le gouvernement du pays par le pays. La Cour veut le gouvernement personnel du roi. Au bout de l'un se trouvent l'ordre et la liberté: au bout de l'autre se trouve une révolution."[1]

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[1] *Cours de littérature*, vol. XII, p. 268, and *Conseiller du Peuple.*

[2] In his preface to the collected speeches of Lamartine M. Louis Ulbach also states that after the battle of the Coalition, the King sent twice for Lamartine, and attempted, *en prévision de l'inconnu*, to attach indissolubly to his cause a man whose sense of duty was so strong, yet who declined to be bound by any party ties. Cf. *La France parlementaire, Lamartine et son temps*, p. lxxi.

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[1] Cf. pamphlet, *État de la question*, published during the elections of 1839; also *Correspondance*, DCXCIV.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE EASTERN QUESTION

BEFORE leaving Paris to attend the preparations for the elections in his native province, Lamartine had a further interview with Royer-Collard, who again assured him of the great future before him. Susceptible to flattery as he was, and himself convinced that he was destined to play a leading part in the political development of France, Royer-Collard's solemnly uttered augury appears to have produced a deep impression on Lamartine's mind. Nor was he much less elated that the genius which had guided his literary taste in youth, M. de Chateaubriand, should express analogous sentiments on his behalf, and that the dreaded pamphleteer Cormenin had been brought to embrace his ideas, "aussi populaires mais plus applicables que leurs rêvasseries républicaines." [1] It was consequently with confidence in the mission he had assumed, and unquestioning faith in his personal ability to solve the vexed problems which confronted the practical development of his theories, that he threw himself into the electioneering turmoil at Mâcon.

His confidence in his fellow-citizens was justified. Mâcon, *intra muros*, returned their brilliant deputy by a majority largely in excess of that which had seated him in the previous elections.[2] As Lamartine had anticipated, however, the country had not sustained Count Molé's Government, and the Minister handed in his resignation on March 8 (1839). As the moment for the meeting of the new Parliament approached, the situation became even more critical. Count Molé declined to present himself before the Chamber, and the King found it impossible to constitute a ministry capable of taking his place. Under these peculiar circumstances Louis-Philippe had recourse to an abnormal expedient, approved, however, by the political lights to whom he appealed. A provisional ministry was got together, composed of men of little or no political influence, whose functions consisted in opening the session, and despatching current business until such time as a regular cabinet, practically designated by the Chamber itself, could be formed. The Duc de Montebello, French Ambassador at Naples, accepted the nominal presidency of this makeshift, under whose auspices the session was opened on April 4, 1839.[1]

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCXCII.

[2] *Ibid.*, DCXCIII. His majority in 1837 had been but five, while it now was seventy, exclusive of some thirty lost votes, claimed in his favour.

Despite certain mutual concessions, however, the abnormal situation had become intolerable when, on May 12, an insurrectionary movement, headed by two prominent Republicans, Barbès and Blanqui, had the result of bringing order out of the chaos. Quelled without difficulty, the occurrence nevertheless made it apparent to all that a strong hand was imperative if more serious revolutionary outbreaks were to be avoided. A compromise was at length reached by virtue of which Thiers, Guizot, and Odilon Barrot waived their several pretensions in favour of Marshal Soult. But all recognized that the expedient resorted to could, under the most favourable circumstances, be but short-lived. Of homogeneity this Cabinet contained not a trace, composed as it was of adversaries temporarily held together by circumstances doomed to infallible disintegration.[2] During the six weeks which preceded the Soult régime, Lamartine devoted all his energies, and the very considerable influence he retained with the two hundred and twenty-one deputies who had fought the Coalition under his guidance, to the pacification of the political passions which still raged within the Chamber, and which were not only affecting the economic conditions of the country seriously, but stirring up alarming social unrest. Accused of ultra-monarchical leanings by his closest friends, he emphatically denied being in touch with the Tuileries, explaining that he merely upheld the principles and prerogatives which the Constitution of 1830 had guaranteed. "Three years of rapine and blood must be the price paid for a change of régime on the establishment of the Republic during the existing political chaos,"[1] he declared. There can be little doubt but that his diagnosis was correct. The political anarchy then reigning within the Chamber must have meant social anarchy throughout the land, had the dam which restrained the turbid flood been swept aside.

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[1] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 376.

[2] Cf. De Mazade, *Monsieur Thiers*, p. 146.

It would be beyond the scope of this study to follow the see-saw of factional intrigue and agitation during the short period of M. de Montebello's anomalous administration, for Lamartine's action, while always conciliatory, was purely negative. But with the advent to power of Marshal Soult, the foreign policy of France became once more a living force. The Eastern Question had been brought to an acute phase by the invasion of Syria by Ibrahim Pasha. The integrity of the Ottoman Empire was seriously menaced by the Pasha of Egypt, and the European Powers found themselves again confronted by the mixed problem of adherence to the *status quo*, or a division of the spoils in the interests of Occidental civilization. Although Louis-Philippe had not unlimited faith in the durability or strength of the Marshal's parliamentary position,[1] he realized that the unsatisfactory situation at home demanded a diversion abroad reflecting glory on the somewhat tarnished prestige of his Government.[2] He was consequently not loath to improve the opportunity offered France to regain her place in the diplomatic counsels of Europe. On July 1, 1839, Marshal Soult tentatively opened the debate in Parliament, which, contrary to general expectations, immediately assumed prime importance. The variety of opinions was decidedly confusing; each orator insisted on his personal policy, which was frequently diametrically opposed to that of his predecessor. The Duc de Valmy proposed that the Egyptian Pasha be sacrificed to the interests of the Turkish sovereign, while M. de Carné saw the regeneration of the East in the triumph of Mehemet Ali and his Arabs. Lamartine felt himself in his natural element when dealing with the question he had, in a sense, made his own since his prolonged travels in the East.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCXCVIII.

It was therefore with renewed ardour that he took up the theme he had treated in his maiden speeches of 1834. No comparison can be made, however, between the finished oratory, the harmonious arrangement, the serried argument or brilliancy of language in this magnificent outburst, and the utterances of five years before. During this period the orator had made gigantic strides, and was in full possession of his marvellous gifts. Yet this oration, which, if one of the most chimerical, was one of the most eloquent Lamartine ever pronounced, was an improvisation from start to finish, for the fragmentary notes he consulted hardly fill a printed page.[3] Fully convinced of the expediency of French intervention in the diplomatic imbroglio, he sought to make clear to his hearers the actual condition of affairs in the countries he had personally visited. From the outset he made it evident that he himself saw no other alternative but a division of the *Sick Man's* property in accordance with the legitimate ambitions of the civilizing elements of the Occident. The maintenance of the *status quo* in the Orient was, he insisted, an anachronism: "there is no longer a Turkey, there is no longer an Ottoman Empire except in diplomatic fictions. . . ." Seeking the causes of this rapid decadence, he finds them in the religious fanaticism which precludes any system of legitimate government based on the regular transmission of power or preparation for political responsibilities. Nor can he find any stable elements constituting the so-called Ottoman Empire, outside of Constantinople. Can the coasts of the Black Sea, where on all sides Russian forts are scattered, be called the Ottoman Empire? Are Moldavia and Wallachia [1] (practically Russian protectorates, where a Turkish soldier dares not put his foot) the Ottoman Empire? Is Servia, which has thrice conquered the Moslem oppressor, the Ottoman Empire? Does the Ottoman Empire include the four millions of Bulgarians, of Macedonians, of Greeks scattered amongst the islands, and the countless hordes of Asia Minor and Syria? No; these heterogeneous elements, held together by mere tyrannical force, and seeking but an opportunity to establish their political independence, in no wise constitute a nation. In the Orient neither national nor political homogeneity exists: there is but a master surrounded by slaves.

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[1] He deemed it would last one year. Cf. *Mémoires de Metternich*, vol. VI, p. 364.

[2] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 48.

[3] Cf. René Doumic, "Lamartine orateur," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, September 15, 1908.

Turning then to the political and diplomatic aspect of the question, the speaker failed to discern in the maintenance of the *status quo* any profit but to England and Russia. He could understand the value of the system of *status quo* for the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, before the treaty of 1774, and before that of 1792; he could understand it even up to 1813. In short, he understood it up to the time of the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Navarino in 1827 — "that act of national insanity on the part of France and England for the benefit of Russia." But after the usurpation of the Crimea; after the Russian protectorate in the Moldo-Wallachian provinces; after the occupation and emancipation of Greece by the allies; after the conversion of the Black Sea into a Russian lake, and the creation of Sebastopol, whence the Russian fleet could reach Constantinople in twenty-four hours; after the treaties of Adrianople, of Unkiar-Skelessi and Kutaya, and the spoliation of the southern half of the Ottoman Empire by those who professed themselves its protectors, the *status quo* was as derisive as the farce of a Polish nationality. If France was serious in her desire to maintain the *status quo*, however, there was but one line of action open to her: she must lend aid to the Sultan in suppressing the revolt in Syria and in regaining possession of Egypt. Failing to do this it was only a question of time when England would be mistress of the Mediterranean. Firmly planted in Egypt, holding the mouths of the Nile and the Red Sea, with a string of stations from Gibraltar to Port-Saïd, Great Britain would control the route to India, and hold in her grasp the monopoly of the world's commerce. To the prophetic vision of Lamartine the Suez Canal already existed, and the predominance of England in Egypt was a foregone conclusion.

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[1] Now the Kingdom of Roumania.

The advice he gave his countrymen was a radical departure from the pacific foreign policy hitherto followed by the July Monarchy. "Call together a Congress, if there is still time, and there negotiate concerning spheres of interest appropriate to the equitable pretensions of the four Great Powers [Russia, Austria, France, and England]. If it is too late for diplomatic action, refuse energetically to join in an attack on the Sultan's fleet, but seize immediately in the East a maritime and military point of vantage, similar to what England holds at Malta, or Russia in the Black Sea; seize provisionally an earnest of your influence and strength, whence you can dominate either negotiations or events." [1] At the close of his long and impassioned harangue, Lamartine again gives utterance to the battle-cry which his previous significant warning, "*Messieurs, la France s'ennuie*," had echoed through the land. Reproaching the timid politicians who sought to isolate France from participation in Continental affairs through fear of the unstable political situation at home, he urges "une puissante diversion nationale imprimée aux esprits qui se pervertissent dans l'inaction, une impulsion forte et longue vers les grandes entreprises au dehors. . . . Notre salut n'est plus aujourd'hui que là: il y a longtemps que je vous le dis. Nous manquons d'air: donnez-nous-en, donnez-en à la France qui étouffe dans le traité de Vienne." [2]

In his reply to M. Odilon Barrot, who accused him of advocating an immoral policy in regard to the Eastern Question, Lamartine qualified and attenuated several of his remarks, it is true; yet the impression remains that he did so in compliance with motives of general expediency, for he cleverly shifts the argument from the diplomatic to the philosophic aspects of the situation, while vindicating the purely patriotic interpretation to be given his words. Going still farther afield, he cries: "N'y a-t-il pas un sentiment au dessus du patriotisme lui-

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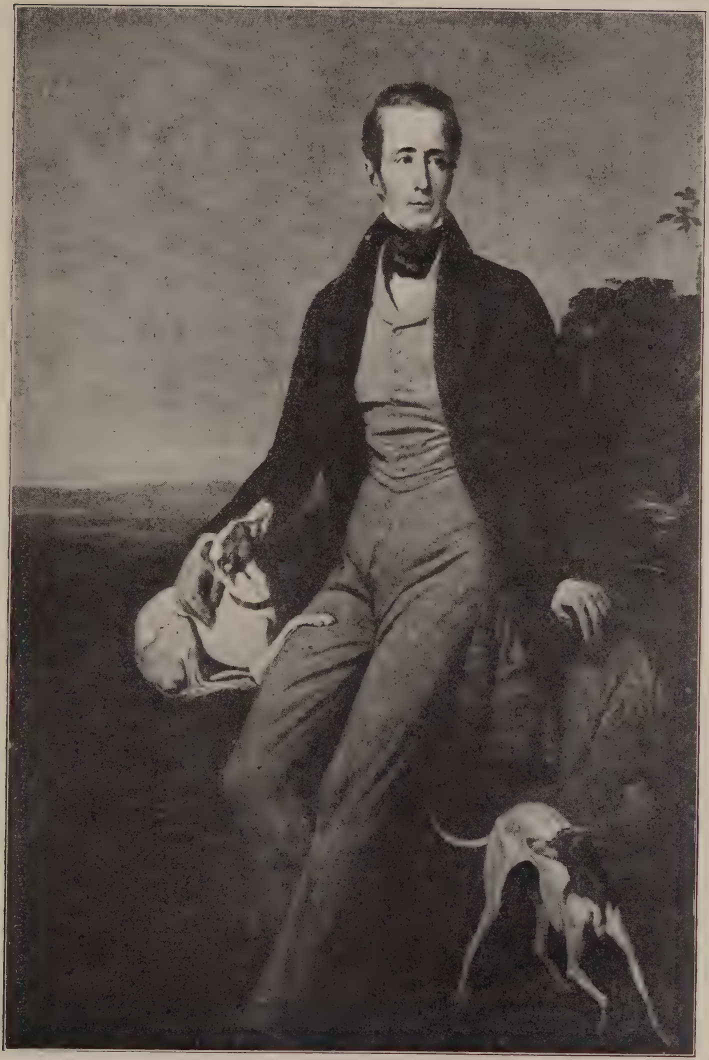
[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. II, p. 225.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 227.



LAMARTINE IN 1839
From the painting by Decaisne

même, le sentiment du développement de l'humanité." [1] This sentiment, he maintains, would in itself authorize the dismemberment of the corpse known to diplomacy as the Ottoman Empire.

In any case the effect produced by this speech, or speeches (for the reply to Barrot certainly ranks as an oratorical masterpiece), was very profound. Lamartine himself naïvely writes Virieu that his speeches "ont fait une impression telle que je n'en ai jamais vu, même aux plus grands jours de Berryer. . . . Le mot général est que de *dix ans*, et peut-être de *quarante ans*, la tribune n'a pas vu mieux."[2] Obviously he exaggerates. Nevertheless, even by his enemies he was acknowledged to wield a power which could no longer be ignored.

Much has been written concerning the extent to which Lamartine's finest oratorical efforts may be considered improvisations. M. René Doumic, who was given access to the storehouse at Saint-Point, where masses of letters and documents are preserved, is of the opinion that very little in important speeches was left to chance.[3] Mention has been made above of a short page of memoranda carried by Lamartine to the rostrum on the occasion of his great discourse on Oriental affairs. Practically every point he expounded was jotted down on that scrap of paper: a word, a broken phrase, served, however, as the foundation for long flights of magnificent rhetoric. Of necessity the arguments were studied out beforehand; figures and dates indicated; and now and then a telling phrase written in full. Such catchwords were manifestly polished and prepared in advance, although frequently slightly altered in delivery. Little was left to the inspiration of the moment, where essentials were concerned, and Lamartine never departed from the general outline he had traced when preparing his harangue. The notes he took with him were merely landmarks which permitted him to develop indefinitely the sentiment he expressed, without fear of losing the thread in the maze of metaphor with which he interlarded the solid prose of political or diplomatic fact. But the performance was no less wonderful because prepared.[1]

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[1] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. II, p. 231.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCI.

[3] Cf. "Lamartine orateur," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, September 15, 1908.

As the Government became more deeply involved in the Eastern Question, Lamartine sought to inspire his countrymen with the desire to play a leading part in the settlement of an international problem wherein, he believed, French interests were being slighted. The revision of the treaties of 1815 — agreements subscribed to when France was in no position to react against the overwhelming odds which confronted her — must be insisted upon. The Ministry of Marshal Soult, hesitating and tentative as its policy was, held to the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire, while accepting the *status quo:* that is to say, permitting the rebel Pasha of Egypt to retain his hold on Syria, and practically renounce his allegiance to the Sublime Porte. On January 11, 1840, Lamartine again addressed his colleagues on this important issue: "the most important crisis with which France had had to deal since the founding of her interests in the East."[2] To the weak and vacillating policy followed must be attributed the victory gained by the rebellious Mehemet Ali over the Ottoman troops at Nizib, and the treacherous surrender of the Turkish fleet. This policy condemned France to isolation, and separated her from England, who desired the maintenance of the *status quo ante*. Russia, profiting by the dissensions existing between the two Western Powers, was already negotiating for the seizure of Constantinople through the medium of M. de Brunnow, in London.[1] But where Lamartine was mistaken was in his belief that by granting political independence to the Pasha of Egypt the world would be deprived of the means of communication between Europe and India.[2] Unacquainted as he necessarily was with the secrets of the diplomacy he attacked, he presented to his colleagues a one-sided view, which, although plausible and even profound, lacked completeness. He discerned a solution of the problem only in the disruption of the Ottoman Empire. For the hour of deliverance from the crushing weight of the Turkish corpse, he devoutly prays. His policy of "spheres of interest" for France, Russia, Austria, and England (one and all at the expense of the Turk, of course) must in the long run, he maintains, not only benefit the civilizing nations of Europe, but be an inestimable boon to the suffering populations groaning under the barbarous yoke of Islam.[3]

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[1] In his letter to Virieu of January 13, 1840, Lamartine styles his speech "une assez bonne *improvisation.*" Cf. *Correspondance*, DCCXV.

[2] *La France parlementaire*, vol. II, p. 295.

Chimerical as this readjustment of the eternal problem sounded, it presented a certain analogy to the policy the Government was at the time secretly negotiating with England. The two factors which complicate the question to-day, United Italy and the German Empire, did not then exist. Lamartine never had any sympathy with the aspirations of Italians to become a nation, and he fully realized the dangers to France of a united Germany on her eastern frontier. In a vigorous policy in the Eastern Mediterranean he discerned an opportunity to shake off the fetters which had bound his country since 1815, and an eventual possibility of reëstablishing the former frontier on the Rhine.[1]

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[1] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 71.

[2] *La France parlementaire*, vol. II, p. 304.

[3] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. II, p. 307; also Louis Blanc, *op. cit.*, vol. V, p. 430.

On August 28, 1840, Lamartine began a series of articles in the "Journal de Saône et Loire," exposing his views on the Eastern Question, and the folly of the policy the Government had adopted. An analysis of these writings yields practically the pith of his speeches of July 1, 1839, and January 11, 1840, the arguments advanced being clothed in more popular form. Widely read and considered at home and abroad, these articles contributed not a little to the growing reputation of their author. In England the "Quarterly Review," discussing the issue, remarked: "Some articles, lately published by M. de Lamartine in a prominent newspaper, have produced a great sensation, not only in France, but throughout Europe. This writer, by the elevation of his sentiments, by the enthusiastic yet practical nature of his views, by the honesty of his intention and the soundness of his reasoning, his immense influence, and his indifference to political power, has nevertheless party spirit of every shade and creed arrayed against him." [2]

On March 1, 1840, Marshal Soult's Cabinet had fallen; not on the Eastern Question, however, but on the failure of the Chambers to vote the dowry asked for Louis-Philippe's second son, the Duc de Nemours, on the occasion of his marriage with the Princess Victoria of Saxe-Cobourg-Gotha. M. Louis Blanc sees in this refusal to dower a prince of their Royal House the proof of the Republican sentiments of the bourgeoisie which supposedly represented the bulwarks of the July Monarchy.[3] Opinions differ, however, as to the correctness of this view.

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[1] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 88: "M. de Lamartine fut à peu près seul à dénoncer la chimère et le péril de notre politique égyptienne, et c'était pour y substituer une chimère plus périlleuse encore, celle d'une politique de partage, où la France chercherait son lot sur le Rhin."

[2] September, 1840.

[3] *Histoire de Dix Ans*, vol. V, p. 458.

The rich bourgeoisie, it may be safely asserted, feared the excess of a popular régime, while openly manifesting their dissatisfaction with the dynasty they had created. So close an observer as Henry Heine could only discern an "inconséquence" in the action of the Chamber. Writing to the "Augsburger Zeitung," apostrophizing the timorous citizens of the upper middle classes, he exclaimed: "You shrink with dread before the Republic, and you openly insult your King!"

To Louis-Philippe the humiliation was deep. More especially was the blow felt, as in the formation of the new Ministry the selection of Thiers seemed inevitable. But Louis-Philippe was a philosopher, and swallowing his personal pride, he called the man who, as a leader of the Coalition, had contested his royal prerogatives, to be his chief adviser.

M. Thiers, confronted from the outset by the two hundred and twenty-one supporters of Count Molé's Ministry, now practically under the guidance of Lamartine,[1] realized that his only chance of retaining the power which had slipped into his grasp was by playing to the gallery, and making a bold bid for popularity with the masses. To Lamartine Thiers's advent to power constituted a menace to the tranquillity of France and the peace of Europe. "M. Thiers n'est plus un ministre parlementaire, c'est une personnification de la force extra-parlementaire de la presse, c'est le dictateur de l'ultra-révolution," he wrote to M. de Champvans.[2] The bold stroke Thiers made for popularity was the motion he introduced into Parliament for the transference of the remains of Napoleon from St. Helena to France. As early as May 12, Lamartine wrote his ward, Léon de Pierreclos: "Les cendres de Napoléon ne sont pas éteintes, et il en souffle des étincelles." [3] None saw more clearly than he the peril which must arise out of what he called "les jongleries napoléoniennes."[1] For the hero who "incarna le matérialisme dans un chiffre armé," he professed only "hatred, horror, and contempt."[2] He frankly confesses to Virieu, however, in the same letter, that, finding the Left, on which he had counted for support, ready to abandon him and to go over to Thiers, he had considered diplomacy the better course, and modified the harshness of his judgment in view of the temper of his audience. This concession to his popularity with the Chamber is so at variance with his usual bold and disdainful independence, that it can only be accounted for by his eagerness to preserve, at almost any cost, the influence he possessed, against the crisis he foresaw. One of his biographers considers this speech "le plus beau de tous ses discours."[3] M. Deschanel applauds Lamartine's words as at once "a monument of lofty reason and a model of oratorical tactics and parliamentary ability." Nevertheless, whatever may have been Lamartine's object in attenuating the scathing utterances he had most certainly prepared, to accord with the humour of his hearers, we cannot help feeling that his reputation as a statesman would have been enhanced had he categorically refused to vote the credit demanded by the Ministry for an object which he so distinctly recognized as a peril to France. This much said, none can deny the extraordinary cleverness and tact of what must appear, in the light of his vote, a purely platonic protest.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCXXIII. [2] *Ibid.*, DCXXI. [3] *Ibid.*, DCCXXVI.

Placing himself positively on the ground of lofty patriotic sentiments, he tells his hearers that if he associates himself, as a Frenchman, with the pious duty of granting a tomb on his native soil to one of the men who made most *noise* on the planet, it is because his name has become synonymous with that of France. Yet he was a man whose will overruled for ten years the laws, the wishes, and the destiny of his country. It was not without a certain regret that he (Lamartine) witnessed the passionate enthusiasm this memory aroused. Perhaps the ashes of the great man had better been left a while longer on that distant, ocean-bound rock. The ancients allowed a certain time to elapse between the death of a hero and the judgment of posterity: when impartial, the verdict of history was more sure of being definite. The ashes were not yet cold enough to be touched; danger still lay in the smouldering embers; the danger of fanaticism; for a nation like France with difficulty separated gratitude from common sense. And growing bolder, he expresses himself as ready to accept unpopularity when he affirms that he entertains no enthusiasm for the great man; that he does not prostrate himself before this ideal; that he does not accept the "Napoleonic religion," the worship of force, which for some time past has replaced in the national spirit the sacred religion of liberty. "I do not believe it is prudent thus continually to deify war," he warns; "to excite the already too impetuous seething of French blood which they would have us believe is impatient to be shed after twenty-five years of peace, as if peace, which constitutes the happiness and glory of the world, could be a shame to nations." Recalling his own youth, the orator confesses that he owes his love, his passion, for liberty to the public oppression which the name of the man it is now proposed to honour evokes. "Oui, j'ai compris pour la première fois ce que valaient la pensée et la parole libres en vivant sous ce régime de silence et de volonté unique dont les hommes d'aujourd'hui ne voient que l'éclat, mais dont le peuple et nous, nous sentions la pesanteur." Expressing ever more forcibly his apprehension as to whither their demonstrative enthusiasm may lead them, he pleads with his hearers not to pander to the opinions of a people too prone to worship that which dazzles it rather than that which serves it. "Let us be careful lest we cause them to despise these less brilliant, but a thousand times more popular, institutions under which we live, and for which our fathers died fighting." The new monarchy, that of reason, representative in its institutions, and pacific withal, ran the risk of being discredited in the eyes of the people, were too much stress laid on the brilliancy of the past. Had Napoleon been a European Washington, content with serving his country, strengthening its institutions, and fostering the growth of popular liberties, the speaker doubted whether all this enthusiasm would have been awakened. "You insult your country!" cried a voice. "No, sir," calmly retorted Lamartine, "I am only analyzing human nature." And he went on to describe the unheeded tombs of a Mirabeau and of a Lafayette, whose lives had been devoted to the unselfish spread of popular liberties. "Take heed lest you overdo your encouragement of genius at any price. I dread it for our future. I fear these men who have a double standard, . . . who preach an official doctrine of liberty, legality, and progress, and who adopt as their symbol the sword and despotism." Enumerating the various resting-places suggested for the ashes of their hero, Lamartine counsels his countrymen to adopt an epitaph which shall fit at once their enthusiasm and their prudence, "the only inscription fitted for this unique man, and for the difficult epoch in which you live: '*À Napoléon . . . seul.*' These three words, while attesting that this military genius had no equal, will at the same time attest before France, Europe, and the world, that if this generous nation knows how to honour her great men, she knows also how to judge them, and to distinguish in them their faults and their services. . . ." [1] Be it remembered that these prophetic words were spoken in 1840 — eleven years before the events he so clearly foresaw.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCXXVIII.

[2] *Ibid.*, DCCXXX.

[3] Émile Deschanel, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 118. M. Deschanel is in error when dating the speech on March 26 instead of May 26, for the discussion was only opened on May 12.

Lamartine has been reproached with idealizing the Napoleonic epoch in his ode entitled "Bonaparte," written in 1821.[2] But these reproaches came from the ultra-royalist and Catholic parties.[3] In the edition of his collected works which he published by subscription in 1860, Lamartine says that where some found him too severe he himself considered he had been too indulgent. ". . . Je me reprochais quelque complaisance pour la popularité posthume de ce grand nom. La dernière strophe surtout est un sacrifice immoral à ce qu'on appelle la gloire. . . . J'ai corrigé ici ces deux vers qui pesaient comme un remords sur ma conscience." [4] Louis-Philippe had at first been considerably startled by Thiers's insistence that the Emperor's ashes be brought to France; but he had yielded, and authorized M. Guizot, then Ambassador in England, to make the request of the British Government. Lord Palmerston readily agreed, seeing an opportunity to gain, by his compliance, advantages in another direction. On May 13, 1840, writing to his brother, the English Minister observed: "This is a thoroughly French request"; but added that there was no valid reason why the English Government should hesitate to grant it.[5]

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[1] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. II, pp. 348–56.

[2] Although in his commentary on this ode, published in his collected works, Lamartine gives the date as above, there is reason for the belief, held by M. Léon Séché, that the poem was written in 1823. Cf. *Lamartine*, p. 192.

[3] Cf. Émile Deschanel, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

[4] *Œuvres complètes*, vol. I, p. 376.

[5] Bulwer, *Life of Palmerston*, vol. III, p. 40.

Knowing that Lamartine was to speak on the subject, and fully aware that his eloquence might be detrimental to the project, Thiers attempted to dissuade him from his intention. Lamartine refused, however; stating that imitators of the great War-Lord must be discouraged. "Oh," replied Thiers, "would anybody dream of imitating him?" "You are right," acquiesced Lamartine, who remembered with anxiety the recent affair at Strasbourg; "you are right; I ought to have said 'parodists' of Napoleon." [1] The effect of Lamartine's speech was prodigious. No one rose to refute his assertions: even M. Thiers remained silent. But although his warnings were unheeded, Lamartine's words considerably cooled the primitive enthusiasm of his colleagues, who refused the credit asked for. A subscription started by the press was also abandoned. Yet Thiers clung tenaciously to his project, and finally, on July 7, the financial difficulties having been overcome, the frigate *Belle Poule*, under the command of the King's son, the Prince de Joinville, set sail for St. Helena.

Among the most important speeches delivered by Lamartine during the session of 1840–41 must assuredly be counted his prophetic opposition to the proposed fortifications around Paris. The question of encircling the capital with walls defended by a belt of detached forts had arisen as early as 1833, but public opinion had not favoured the measure. In 1840, however, owing to the gravity of the situation abroad, this opposition was partially neutralized by the desire to protect the capital efficiently against aggression by a foreign foe. Although some felt that, when imprisoned within walls, Paris would be more readily at the mercy of a local revolutionary *coup de main*, others believed that the fact that France was preparing herself against attack might have a salutary effect on the international situation. The controversy waxed hot, the opponents maintaining that, if recommended for defence against foreign invaders, the detached forts were no less designed to command the streets of Paris. This object was but too manifest to the revolutionists, who denounced the scheme as another menace to the liberties of the people.[1]

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[1] Letter from Captain Callier to Marshal Soult, cited by Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 163.

Lamartine, who shared this point of view, or at least appreciated its significance, directed all the energies of his impassioned eloquence against the proposed fortifications. He contended that they would be useless against a foreign invader and might prove a weapon in the hands of an insurgent mob, while they must constitute a permanent menace to the freedom of deliberation in the National Assembly, as well as to the inviolability of the Constitution. From the outset it would seem as if Lamartine clearly foresaw the rôle these walls were to play thirty years later, when the Commune held the terrorized capital in its frenzied grasp, and the ramparts, constructed to keep the foreign invaders out, retarded the advent of the disciplined troops, eager to quell the anarchy prevailing within the burning city. Contrary to the accepted opinion, he from the first insisted that the question was not a purely military one, and that, far from constituting a security for the country, these fortifications might prove an additional peril. "The strength of France," he said, "is not to be sought in the walls around Paris, but in her people, in her soldiers." The army is a movable wall which can be transported hither and thither according to the requirements of circumstance. The immovable walls it was proposed to build around an immense conglomeration, such as Paris, could only serve, he insisted, as a temporary refuge for a demoralized horde of soldiery, fleeing before an advancing and victorious foe. Imprison these dispirited forces pell-mell with a million or more of half-famished citizens of the lowest classes (for naturally all those who could afford it would have fled the threatened city), and pillage and ruin must ensue. Napoleon himself had always been against the fortification of the capital, for he realized that a battle lost in the open could never be redeemed behind the bars of a beleaguered capital whose vulnerability lay as much at the mercy of the seething rebellious forces within the gates as from without. "Are the walls to be constructed in order that the Government may take refuge behind them?" he queried. But what could a government, in an open palace such as the Tuileries, do for France? Surrounded by a million and a half of famished and furious insurgents, clamouring for bread and revenge, any government must be powerless. On the other hand, should the Government leave Paris, the walls would only serve to protect the ruin and desolation which such a step must entail. "Paris et le gouvernement séparés, c'est le corps et l'âme séparés; c'est la mort du gouvernement et de la capitale." Both 1870 and 1914 have proved the fallacy of this assertion, too sweeping in its generality; but at the time the phrase was uttered a real reason existed for the contention.

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[1] Cf. Sir Thomas May, *Democracy in Europe*, vol. II, p. 261.

Moreover, with the poet's gift of prescience, Lamartine discerned beneath the passionate discussion the rivalry of factions. If the Government supported and insisted on the measure, it was because it considered that popular license might the more readily be restrained within a walled city. If the Republicans advocated the construction of fortifications and ramparts around the capital, it was because they deemed it possible to convert them into weapons against the Government when their hour should come. Despite Lamartine's warnings the bill was passed by a large majority, for the military *esprit* was strong in France at this period, and public opinion welcomed any outward and visible sign of the martial enthusiasm which had animated the generation to which their fathers belonged.[1] Thiers had led his country to the verge of war in his diplomatic negotiations over the Egyptian question, and Thiers was responsible for the popular agitation over the fortifications. The Cabinet of March 1 had fallen in consequence of the Premier's action in the Orient, but the Government still clung to the scheme for the protection of the capital, and the Guizot Ministry which succeeded Thiers adopted the measure on its programme. M. Guizot was himself a fervent advocate of the fortifications, believing, as he did, that the moral effect abroad would do much to enhance the diplomatic action France had entered upon. During a visit to Windsor in 1844, when he accompanied Louis-Philippe to England, Guizot reports in his "Mémoires" that the Duke of Wellington expressed himself in the following terms: "Your Paris fortifications have closed that era of wars of invasion and of rapid marches against capitals, which Napoleon opened. They have almost done for you what the ocean has for us. If the rulers of Europe took my advice, they would all do likewise. I don't know whether as a consequence wars would be less long or less bloody; but they would assuredly be less revolutionary. You have rendered, by your example, a great service to the States and the security of Europe." [2]

In his arguments against the sinking of millions in the proposed fortifications, Lamartine pointed out that these vast sums would be infinitely more advantageously invested in the construction of railways. Such railways, he contended, would be in themselves fortifications, not only for Paris, but for the national territory, since their use would permit the rapid transportation of great bodies of troops to any or all points menaced by the enemy.[1]

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[1] In the Upper House Count d'Alton Shée defended Lamartine's views. Cf. *Mes mémoires*, vol. II, p. 109.

[2] *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de mon temps*, vol. VI, p. 36.

This would lead to the belief that Lamartine foresaw at this early date possible trouble with Germany. Such was, however, far from being the case. On the contrary, Lamartine then believed that an harmonious *modus vivendi* could be acccomplished. "Ma politique à moi est éminemment allemande," he wrote M. de Fontenay from Geneva on July 29, 1841. And he added: "It is the only policy which befits this half-century filled with the Oriental question. Germany is the balance in the scales of the two great ambitions in the world: it behooves us not to let her topple over towards Russia or England, but to combine with her to insure strength and peace." [2]

The magnificent verses of the "Marseillaise de la Paix" were written with this object in view. Alas! for once his prophetic vision was at fault. Addressing the majestic Rhine, the poet sings:

"Il ne tachera plus le cristal de ton onde,
Le sang rouge du Franc, le sang bleu du Germain;
Ils ne crouleront plus sous le caisson qui gronde,
Ces ponts qu'un peuple à l'autre étend comme une main!
Les bombes et l'obus, arc-en-ciel des batailles,
Ne viendront plus s'éteindre en sifflant sur tes bords;
L'enfant ne verra plus, du haut de tes murailles,
Flotter ces poitrails blonds qui perdent leurs entrailles,
Ni sortir des flots ces bras morts!" [3]

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[1] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 420 (October 1, 1843).

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCLXXII.

[3] Cf. *Recueillements poétiques*. Edgar Quinet, a warm friend and enthusiastic admirer, nevertheless reproached Lamartine as being "*nuageux de son esprit.*" Cf. Paul Gautier, *Un Prophète, Edgar Quinet* (Paris: Plon, 1917), p. 290. Quinet published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of June 15, 1841, a poem entitled "Le Rhin," which is a reply to the "Marseillaise de la Paix," and which, politically speaking, is far more perspicacious. As is well

The verses are dedicated to Dargaud, who, it is to be presumed, shared his friend's fantastic vision of the Latin walking hand in hand with the Hun.

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known, Lamartine's ode was itself an answer to the "Rhin allemand," an impassioned effusion written by the German poet Becker, and by him dedicated to the great French bard. Cf. *Correspondance*, DCCLXVI; letter to Madame de Girardin, dated May 17, 1841.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE GUIZOT MINISTRY

A GREAT sorrow had overtaken Lamartine in the last days of August, 1840. His father, nearly ninety years of age, passed quietly away during his son's absence at Hyères, whither the husband and wife had gone in search of health and for rest from the exacting demands of politics. "My father had become as a son to me," he tenderly assures Virieu. "I am like an uprooted tree, lopped of its branches. . . . I cannot leave my wife, for she suffers as much as I do." [1]

Although the Chevalier, as he was invariably styled, never took so full a place in Lamartine's heart as his mother had done, the bond which united them had become closer with years, and the younger man paid ever more frequent heed to the elder's counsel, based on the experience of so many conflicting phases of French public life during the Great Revolution and the Empire.

When Guizot returned from London to take his place in the Soult Cabinet (1840), Lamartine was summoned to Paris, and offered the post just vacated, or, should he prefer it, the Embassy at Vienna. Both these offers he politely but firmly declined. Believing that the refusal concealed some political ambition, Guizot asked Lamartine point-blank the real motives which prompted his declining this highest favour in the gift of the King. "Monsieur le Ministre," replied his interlocutor, "if you insist on knowing the real reasons of my refusal of the royal favour, it is because you apparently consider me a politician whose actual views it behooves you to sound."

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCXLI.

"That is certainly so," replied Guizot, "otherwise why should I insist?" "Well," enigmatically answered Lamartine, "since you consider me a politician, cease questioning me concerning the motives which guide me, for were I to confide them to you, I should no longer be a Statesman worthy of the name." [1] The date of this conversation is uncertain. Writing to his sister, Madame de Cessiat, on October 23, Lamartine had apparently not yet made up his mind as to the course he would pursue, for he then says: "I don't think I could decide on entering a cabinet in which traces of the Coalition persist. Nevertheless, I will wait M. Guizot's return, as he offers me the portfolio for Foreign Affairs. My own tastes prompt me to stand aside and gratuitously lend my support to the new government."[2] But a few days later he wrote M. Ronot, his lawyer at Mâcon: "On m'annonce, dans une heure, la visite de M. Guizot pour m'offrir *l'intérieur*." And he professes himself ready to accept, for he would blush, he adds, if he refused to do what he could to avert the ruin which he foresees. Nevertheless, he expresses the hope that "doubts as to his capacity and his talents may prevail," and that he may remain what he prefers to be — "a good soldier in the ranks." [3] When it came to the point, however, M. Guizot appears to have reconsidered his offer of the Ministry of the Interior, the only portfolio Lamartine would consent to accept,[4] although maintaining the offer of an embassy, or as delegate to a possible European Conference on the diplomatic situation. But Lamartine persisted in his resolution to accept the important Home Office or nothing, for he realized that at best the experiment must be a hazardous one. "Je ne comprends que les dévouements utiles, mais non les suicides au profit d'autrui et au détriment des idées," he wrote M. de Champvans.[1] Willing to run risks in a position which guaranteed him a predominant voice in the conduct of his country's affairs, he knew that the empty honour of a subordinate cabinet rank could only injure the undeniable influence he wielded in Parliament, and shake the confidence the public had vested in him. Unless he could lead, he would not be bound by party ties. It was hardly to be expected that Guizot would yield to Lamartine's demand for "*une position équipondérante à la sienne*"; had he done so, he would have constituted a government with two heads instead of one. But Lamartine's disappointment was keen. He felt that the two hundred and twenty-one, who had followed his lead since the days of the Coalition, had vilely abandoned him, and lost him an opportunity of demonstrating his worth. Without their opposition, on the ground that his views were too dangerously liberal, Lamartine was convinced that Guizot would have agreed to his pretensions for a dual control.[2] While he refused the offer of an embassy he did so with great personal regret, for, as he wrote Virieu, "C'est l'idéal, selon moi, d'une belle vie. Mais j'y perdrais la force de mon désintéressement dans le pays." [3]

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. I, p. 349.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCXLVI.

[3] *Ibid.*, DCCXLIX.

[4] Cf. letter to M. de Champvans of October 29, 1840; *Correspondance*, DCCL.

The harmonious relations between Lamartine and the Guizot Ministry were to prove short-lived. "If I have not quarrelled with them in three months, I shall nevertheless have great difficulty in defending them, even as a *pis aller*," he wrote his wife on October 2, 1841.[4]

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCL. "Je n'ambitionne qu'un portefeuille, *le ministère de l'opinion publique*."

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCL; also letter to Virieu, November 4, DCCLI. No trace of these negotiations is to be found in Guizot's *Mémoires;* nor does Thureau-Dangin mention Lamartine's name in connection with the composition of the Cabinet.

[3] *Correspondance*, DCCLI and DCCLX.

[4] Cf. Doumic, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, September 15, 1908.

Disgust with the policy adopted, frustrated personal ambition, perhaps, and the necessity of clearly defining to the public eye the nature of the attitude he strove to assume, were all considerations which gradually caused him to drift into open opposition to the Government he had hitherto upheld. From Mâcon he wrote his wife in the same letter quoted above: "Les Républicains se jettent de plus en plus dans mes bras avec estime et confiance." When Guizot offered him the Presidency of the Chamber, a position he had at one time most earnestly desired, he refused. "The rôle of caryatides is not for me," he said. "It is the counterfeit of force, not real strength." [1] He was looked upon, he said, as the "Lafayette of public opinion," until such time as he should become the "Casimir Périer de l'ordre," an event he prophetically anticipated would take place within "five or six years." [2] And finally, on November 28, 1842: "For four or five years I shall attempt a great and generous opposition, then, the out of date policies of 1830 being exploded, as a last resource they will throw themselves into our arms. You know that I have never had a doubt about it. Meanwhile, you will see me execrated and outraged by both parties. I am accustomed to it, and laugh at it. And not only do I laugh over it, but I make use of it. A wave wets you, but it carries you forward. So it is with the wrath of parties." [3] These quotations suffice to show the drift of Lamartine's politics after the defeat of the Coalition. M. Doumic believes that this determination to break with the Guizot Ministry was not dictated either by his defeat in the election for the Presidency of the Chamber, or by the Premier's refusal to meet his wishes concerning the Home Office. These incidents may have hastened his action, but they did not determine it. The eminent French critic is convinced that Lamartine's action was the logical consequence of his disapproval of what he calls "la pensée du règne et le système tout entier." The policy he followed was, indeed, a personal one, a species of duel between a régime and an individual opponent.[1] The phrase describes very accurately the relations existing (especially after 1843) between the ever more independent free-lance and the reactionary tendencies of the Government of July.

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[1] Doumic, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, September 15, 1908.

[2] *Op. cit.*, letter of July 12, 1842.

[3] *Op. cit.*, February 20, 1842.

Meanwhile Lamartine's private and public life was very full — full of interest, full of disappointment and of sorrow. On May 17, 1841, he wrote Madame de Girardin: "I am more sad than ever, distressed in heart and spirit, in soul and concerning personal affairs, to say nothing of physical ills, and because before my eyes lies dying that poor, charming young M. de Pierreclos."[2] Léon de Pierreclos, as has been mentioned, was the son of one of Lamartine's closest friends, who, on his deathbed, had confided the boy to his care. Henceforth, in all but name, he had been the poet's son. All through the published correspondence we find mention of the young man, and several letters addressed to him have been included in the selection Madame Valentine de Cessiat gave to the world after her uncle's death. Unfortunately many of these letters have been curtailed, whole passages being suppressed. M. Louis Barthou, who possesses a number of letters not included in the published correspondence, has recently (1912) given a very interesting explanation of the real relationship which existed between Lamartine and the beautiful Nina de Pierreclos as early as 1813.[3] If his hypothesis is correct, it would fully explain the lifelong care and devotion Lamartine lavished upon the young man, whose education he supervised, and for whose maintenance he provided. In April, 1838, Léon married Alix de Cessiat, the poet's niece, much to the joy of all concerned. Never of robust constitution, the young man's health gradually declined, and he died at Mâcon on July 26, 1841. Lamartine was in Geneva when the fatal news reached him. "Son dernier mot, une minute avant sa mort, a été un adieu et un remerciement à moi . . ." wrote the grief-stricken guardian to Madame de Girardin.[1] The loss was a severe one to him; whatever may have been the nature of their relationship, all goes to prove that Lamartine's interest in the troublesome schoolboy, and later in the gifted young man, was an absorbing one. In later years he had been accustomed to write to Léon with the unrestrained confidence he used when corresponding with Virieu, imparting to him his political worries, his ambitions, and treating him in fact as an intellectual equal whose opinion, even on questions of statesmanship, he would welcome.[2]

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[1] Doumic, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, September 15, 1908; also the same author's *Lamartine*, p. 91.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCLXVI.

[3] "En Marge des 'Confidences,'" *Revue de Paris*, March 1, 1912.

It was only three months before this (April, 1841), that the death of Aymon de Virieu had come as a stunning blow. The bond which bound these two friends for well-nigh forty years of closest intimacy had never slackened. To Virieu, Lamartine opened his innermost heart and laid bare the most sacred secrets of his soul. As a critic of his literary work Lamartine trusted implicitly his friend's taste and judgment, submitting to his opinion every important production of his pen. If, since 1830,

[1] *Correspondance*, DCCLXXIII.

[2] *Ibid.*, DCXCVI, DCCXXVI, DCCLV, DCCLVII, DCCLX. Writing to Madame de Girardin from the bedside of the dying young man Lamartine says: "C'est un spectacle déchirant que la séparation lente de sa femme et de lui. Ils s'adorent. Il m'aimait bien aussi, et je m'y attachais sensiblement pour lui-même, *bien plus que pour ce que l'on croit.*" *Correspondance*, DCCLXVIII.

political differences had existed between the two, Lamartine had endeavoured to explain his conduct on every occasion, and, when possible, cheerfully accepted Virieu's not always lenient criticism. An uncompromising Legitimist, more and more subjected to clerical influences and the narrow provincialism his self-inflicted isolation made inevitable, Virieu could profess no sympathy with the social and democratic reforms which were the basis of Lamartine's political philosophy. In spite of a certain hostility displayed, the poet-statesman clung to this friendship of his youth and early manhood with touching persistency, endeavouring with all his might to regain the tottering affection and dispel erroneous impressions. As M. des Cognets has justly remarked: "Pour le seul Virieu, il a dépensé plus d'éloquence, plus d'adresse et plus de persévérance que pour tous les parlements de Louis-Philippe et les foules révolutionnaires."[1] Before making any important decision Lamartine invariably hesitated and asked himself: "What would Virieu think of it?" Well might he cry out that in this loss the affection of a lifetime was taken from him, and bow down his head in bitterest anguish, turning in despair to that other member of the boyish trio, Guichard de Bienassis.[2]

Moreover, financial worries, from which he was rarely free, were again particularly acute at this period. Matters were apparently so serious that he even considered the advisability of resigning his seat in Parliament, and withdrawing to Saint-Point, there to supervise personally the administration of his large but heavily encumbered estates. A loan was imperative: but he experienced difficulty with the negotiations he had in hand. To Madame de Girardin and the Marquis de la Grange he opened himself with entire frankness. At least two hundred thousand francs was necessary to set him on his feet again. Apparently Madame de Girardin had suggested an appeal to the Rothschilds, for he admits when writing her that the idea is a good one. "If he would lend me two hundred thousand francs for seven years at five per cent, and be content with a mortgage on an estate worth six hundred thousand francs, burdened with only a first mortgage of two hundred and thirty-five thousand, he would save me from other necessities, of which my resignation is the first." [1] To M. de la Grange he wrote a few days later in much the same strain. The sum he needs to tide over the next seven years, without throwing up his political work, is the same, but he offers for mortgage two estates worth together one million four hundred thousand francs, encumbered only to the extent of four hundred and sixty-five thousand francs. "Mon parti est pris," he added, "de me retirer de tout, même du conseil municipal, dans quatre mois, si je ne trouve pas à assurer mes affaires." [2] The trip to Geneva, where the news of Léon's death reached him, was undertaken with the object of obtaining financial aid from bankers in that town. A financier from Paris had, indeed, visited the estates, and professed himself pleased with the general condition of the land, and "delighted with the vines and my labourers and their happy, well-housed families." He said he now understood the mysterious allusion in the "Courrier de Paris" describing Lamartine as "le premier agriculteur de France." "But will he advance me money on this moral asset, at a moral rate of interest? That is the question. He will give me his answer in a month." [3]

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[1] *La Vie intérieure de Lamartine*, p. 305.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCLXIV.

Details as to the negotiations are lacking, but early in October Lamartine reported to M. de la Grange that although his affairs were not settled, they were bettered for a year to come, and the necessity for renouncing public life was for the nonce postponed.[1]

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCLXVIII. [2] *Ibid.*, DCCLXIX. [3] *Ibid.*, DCCLXXI.

During the recess Lamartine continued to fill his houses with company calculated to keep him in touch with the political thought of France, and to follow the rapidly succeeding phases of the home and international situations with keenest interest. Although he strongly disapproved the policy of the Government, he was determined to maintain a respectful attitude towards the Crown, not from sympathy with the dynasty, as we know, but on account of the authority it represented. "Remember," he wrote to M. de Champvans, "remember that one never insults the statue of a saint without bespattering Religion itself." And he adds, "The religion of the Tuileries is prerogatives." Nevertheless, he was fully alive to the peril of the ministerial crisis; but, realizing his personal impotency to avert a catastrophe, he was determined to await the issue and reserve his final action. "Then, if I am still of this world, and of the parliamentary world, it is probable that a great wave of terror will place the broken tiller in my hand: I persist in this belief: a tempest or nothing." [2] In Mâcon his position with the Left was assured. That when the hour of trouble came, the party would turn to him he never doubted. "I am more of a revolutionary than the demagogues, but I am a revolutionist in the name of a Power possessed of a Will, and not in the name of the horde of scribblers, possessing only passions." He styled himself "le grand et honnête démocrate en réserve," the man to whom they must turn when all else failed.[3] Presumptuous as the words must sound, how true was the instinct which prompted their utterance.

During the summer and autumn of 1841 which Lamartine passed in the country near Mâcon, now at Saint-

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCLXXVI. [2] *Ibid.*, DCCLXXVII. [3] *Ibid.*, DCCLXXVII.

Point, now at Monceau, the frequent letters he received from Émile de Girardin and his accomplished wife had kept him in close touch with the political world. As has been said, his name was mentioned for the Presidency of the Chamber, but although he undoubtedly desired the honour, he never put himself forward as an official candidate. And this for the two reasons which he advanced when requesting M. de Girardin not to push his canvass in his newspaper "La Presse." "Firstly," wrote Lamartine, "it is a neutral position, and I only like militant and active positions. Secondly, it is the decorative side of a political career, not its strength." Lastly, he felt that far from enhancing his political standing, the consideration he might win, or lose, as arbiter in parliamentary disputes, might be utilized to greater advantage in his capacity of a simple deputy, free to attack or defend according to circumstances. At the same time, he was not averse to his name being brought forward "platonically," for the votes he obtained would be an evidence to the world that his colleagues appreciated his political worth. Nor would he refuse the honour were it bestowed upon him: but he would accept with "répugnance." The sincerity of the last phrase of this confidential letter cannot be doubted. The writer acknowledges the disappointments political life has brought him, and professes an inclination to throw up the game and remain in his country solitude, "his feet in his wooden shoes." "J'en serais bien tenté," he sighs, "si ce n'était de ce diable au corps politique que je ne puis chasser de moi depuis l'âge de raison et qui me tiendra, j'en ai peur, jusqu'à l'âge où l'on n'en a plus."[1] As a matter of fact, his chances had never been great, and when the election took place, Lamartine obtained but sixty-four votes against one hundred and ninety-three given in favour of M. Sauzet. The meagre support he received came, as was to be expected after his recent private and public expressions of sympathy, chiefly from the Liberal elements in the Chamber — a significant indication that his policy was mistrusted by the Conservatives, who failed to appreciate the radical parliamentary and electoral reforms he upheld.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCLXXXVI.

Early in December, 1841, Lamartine returned to Paris, and in February of the following year took part in the debate, urging an extension of the suffrage, and the abolishment of certain restrictions hampering the election of deputies. This speech,[1] moderate in form, but suggestive of the radical transformations the speaker was prepared to welcome, was his last concession to the "majority" which lent its support to the Guizot Ministry. "La semaine prochaine, je commencerai à parler en homme de grande opposition," he wrote next day, and indeed he felt that the time had come when in a democracy where public opinion was sovereign, the people should be relieved to the utmost of legal restrictions fettering their choice of the men who were to represent them. The doctrines he now advanced were but the logical sequence of those he had professed in 1831, when writing, from London, to M. Saullay, who was acting as his electoral agent in Bergues, during his canvass for that district. "When the country is well settled down," he had then insisted, "when political truth and liberty shall have penetrated all the social strata, furnishing them with the needful light and action, France will walk alone, and any man she selects will be worthy of her confidence."[2] When he spoke "Sur les députés fonctionnaires publics," Lamartine himself believed his speech had produced an unparalleled impression on the Chamber.[3] Be this as it may, the complement to the measures then proposed, contained in his speech of four days later, greatly exceeded in popularity his previous effort. The motion which he had combated in his first speech had been brought forward by M. Ganneron, who contended that deputies who were not salaried public servants at the time of their election should be forbidden to become such during their term of office, and for the year following their return to private life. This measure, although it tended to lessen the influence of the Ministry over the Chamber, was objected to by Lamartine on the ground that it would exclude from office the very men best fitted by experience and talent for rendering good service to the country. But if he had felt constrained to lend his aid to the Government in this instance, M. Guizot's determined opposition to an extension of the electorate, or of popular power or privilege in any form, made it clear that the moment had come when he must combat the reaction which would inevitably result.

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[1] "Sur les députés fonctionnaires publics," February 11, 1842.

[2] Cf. Cochin, *op. cit.*, p. 369.

[3] *Correspondance*, DCCLXXXVIII.

The opportunity came in a motion by M. Ducos for an extension of the electorate by giving votes to all whose names figured on the departmental list of jurymen. "Je viens de sauter un grand fossé au milieu d'un *orage inoui* dans la Chambre," he wrote M. Ronot, of Mâcon, after the vigorous attack on the Government contained in his harangue of February 15.[1] The ditch he leaped was to separate him once and for all, not only from M. Guizot, but from the régime in which he had lost all faith and confidence. Henceforth Lamartine belonged frankly and openly to the Opposition, and if he did not shift his seat to the benches of the Left, his support or sympathy was gradually withdrawn from the party with which he had previously been most frequently identified. The policy of M. Guizot, which he had compared to a "boundary stone" (*borne*),[1] convinced him that in that quarter no hopes could be cherished of a liberal and progressive social action. As he told his hearers on this memorable occasion, he himself was one of those who believed that the political, moral, and social world must be continually transformed in the effort to improve its conditions: an obscure worker, who had devoted life and energy to this task, his ambition was to introduce "slowly, laboriously, prudently, some few new ideas into the compact and immutable mass of accepted theories and changeless social dogma." [2] The attack was a direct challenge to the doctrinaires, who since 1830 had resisted stubbornly every measure calculated to spread amongst the people the principles of individual liberty. Turning to M. Guizot, who had just entered the Chamber, the speaker addressed him directly, accusing him of the pass to which France had been brought in her foreign policy. In the interests of their country the orator pleaded with his colleagues not to reject a proposition which tended to infuse live, active, and patriotic forces into the electorate, strengthen their position at home and abroad, and imbue the body politic with fresh energy to resist the dangers which a European coalition might engender.[3]

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCLXXXIX, "Sur l'adjonction de la liste départementale du jury"; cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 153.

This speech is tantamount to a declaration of principles, for in it Lamartine gives evidence of the normal and logical evolution of his political creed. As long as a ministry gives promise of being in accord with the needs of the country, he is ready and willing to second the efforts he discerns. But should he detect an inclination to retard the regular and gradual social progress a democratic state has the right to expect, his influence is transferred to the party offering more substantial guarantees for the furtherance of the ideal he has enshrined in his political conscience. "If immobility is the one thing required of a government," he told Guizot, "it is quite superfluous to have ministers; boundary stones would suffice." Public opinion immediately adopted the catchword, contemptuously styling the party, "Conservateurs-bornes." "Ce ne fut que lorsqu'il désespéra d'un pouvoir aveugle, immobile, inerte, implacable à toute amélioration, qu'il se tourna décidément vers l'opposition," wrote M. Louis Ulbach.[1] But once the step taken, he was to go far. Although the doctrinaires scoffed at Lamartine's eloquence, disdainfully comparing it as borne on the wings of a swan and a sparrow, symbolizing imagination and lack of reason,[2] they nevertheless sought to attach the brilliant orator to the party in power. But his reason convinced him that by clinging to the old system of the electorate, which gave the vote to only two hundred and twenty thousand electors out of a population of over thirty millions, the Government was hurrying France to a new crisis, one likely to overwhelm the Crown itself. The peril, he felt, was immeasurably increased when, on July 13, 1842, Paris and all France were shocked by the terrible death of the heir to the throne. The Duc d'Orléans, it will be remembered, was killed by jumping from his carriage when the horses ran away in the Chemin de la Révolte, on his way to Saint-Cloud to visit his father. In the case of the demise of the aged Louis-Philippe, the disappearance of the direct heir meant a long regency, for the duke's eldest son [3] was a mere child. "Regencies are the hot-beds of parties," [4] Lamartine wrote Dargaud, and the writer knew too well the bitter hatred existing between factions not to dread the consequences in a house divided against itself. Nor was Lamartine alone in recognizing the danger a regency might give rise to. Writing to his brother shortly after the news reached London, Lord Palmerston declared that the death of the Duc d'Orléans was a calamity affecting not only France but Europe.

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[1] Cf. speech of February 15, 1842, *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 167.

[2] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 157.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 153.

[2] Cf. letter from Doudan to Madame de Lascours, March 11, 1843, cited by Deschanel, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 134.

[3] The Comte de Paris, then only four years of age.

[4] *Correspondance*, DCCXCIV.

Although slightly anticipating the sequence of current events, it would seem advisable to set on record here Lamartine's objections to the steps the Government advocated, should the question of a regency arise in the near future. Two courses were open to the Crown and country: should a general law be promulgated fixing in advance the conditions which should prevail for a regency in the case of any minority, or should a regency in this special case alone be organized? In a word, the question lay between a regency based on the principle of next of kin, and an elective regency, established on the basis of personal fitness. The King, not unnaturally, preferred the former solution as being more in accord with dynastic tradition. Moreover, he feared, in the case of an elective regency, the influences which must inevitably be brought to bear by party passions, and even family jealousies.[1] The will of the late Duke named his wife as guardian of her sons and of their private property, and appointed the Duc de Nemours, his brother, as regent during the minority of the heir to the throne. This arrangement coincided with the opinion of the Government, and M. Guizot introduced a bill providing that, in default of an adult male heir, the regency should legally devolve on the next of kin; to the exclusion of females, however. While some held that the Monarchy of July owed its existence to an elective system, and contended that the regency should, in consequence, be elective, the majority was in favour of a law which should regulate once for all a question capable of giving rise to dangerous discussion. Nor did M. Odilon Barrot's contention, that the principles of democratic monarchy demanded that the people and not the Chamber should elect a regent, meet with any success.

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[1] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. v, p. 95.

Lamartine, who spoke on the matter at the opening of the debate, professed himself contrary to the opinion set forth by the Government, while acknowledging that the question presented a choice of difficulties, "perhaps only a choice of faults," as to the future. That the Duchesse d'Orléans should be set aside appeared to him in the present instance a gross injustice, while the principle excluding females from exercising the regency was one at variance with the whole history of France. Notwithstanding the Salic law twenty-six women had been appointed regents in the thirty-two cases when the emergency had arisen in France. "The law which you propose is neither conservative nor dynastic," he objected; "it is a usurpation of the mother's rights, and places a competitor and a rival in her stead."[1] That the Duchess was a Protestant had no weight with the speaker, for by the fact that the law left the education of her children to the mother she could, unknown to the regent, inculcate her faith in her offspring; a circumstance they could not control; and besides, the principle of religious tolerance embodied in the representative of a great empire could only add to the dignity and power of religion itself. This speech, writes M. Thureau-Dangin, was the event of the day which inaugurated the long and complicated debate. "Le poète était-il encore du centre ou déjà de la gauche? On eut été embarrassé de répondre. A vrai dire, c'était un isolé et un fantaisiste."[1] This appreciation is manifestly tinged by the excessive partisanship of the author. But there is no denying that Lamartine laid himself open to misrepresentation, by reason of what must appear as attacks directed against the dynasty itself. "We do not want to slide from a national government to a dynastic government; exclusively dynastic," he asserted. "The dynasty must be national, not the Nation dynastic." And he asks his hearers whither this continual encroachment on popular liberties will lead them. Will not the people begin to question the efficiency of revolutions made in their name? — an allusion to the political trickery which inaugurated the July Monarchy. Will not the friends of constitutional liberty accuse the dynasty of an attempt to filch prerogatives which belong by right to the Nation? Far be it from him, Lamartine, to deny the dynasty his respectful sympathy in times of bereavement such as these.[2] But he refused to lend himself to a measure which must foster intrigue and consequent peril to the State. The natural rights of the mother must be maintained. Europe would proclaim the failure of the Constitutional Monarchy and the liberties France had established, should they sanction the odious exclusion of maternal rights and banish the mother from the steps of the throne her son was to occupy. The contrast is great between Lamartine's present attitude and that which he adopted six years later, when the Duchess and her child sought his aid in establishing a regency after the flight of Louis-Philippe. But those six years had been witness of the futility of the system

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 244. Lamartine cites twenty-three out of twenty-eight regents in European history as having usurped the throne of their wards.

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[1] *Histoire de la monarchie de Juillet*, vol. v, p. 101.

[2] The address of condolence from the Chamber on the occasion of the Duc d'Orléans's death was entirely composed by Lamartine, who had been appointed chairman of the committee charged with this duty. "This spontaneous expression of the sentiments of the Chamber and of the country was voted without discussion." Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 241.

1830 had devised, and Lamartine knew full well he could not arrest the flood, nor stay the march of destiny, even had he so desired.

Lamartine's brilliant speech produced such an effect on his colleagues that M. Guizot deemed it prudent to attempt an immediate refutation of the arguments advanced.[1] Both he and the King felt that every effort must be exerted to pass the law without amendments, "such as the Commission had unanimously adopted it." [2] But in spite of the arguments brought to bear, the opinions of Lamartine and De Tocqueville found support with the Left, whose spokesman, M. Odilon Barrot, seconded their efforts. It is interesting to note M. Guizot's personal opinion of Lamartine's political ability at a period when the two statesmen were in daily conflict. ". . . I believe that even M. de Lamartine's friends do not accord him full justice as an orator and political writer," generously admits his antagonist in his "Mémoires": "it is as a poet he made his début, and that he captured, very justly, the admiration of the public. Many people, sincerely or maliciously, take advantage of this to discern in him only the poet, and to admire him on this account rather than another. It is said that he himself is vexed by this point of view, and that he places his political achievement far ahead of his verses. Without taking sides, or making comparisons, I have been struck by the superior qualities M. de Lamartine has evinced both as an orator and as a writer of prose." And the writer goes on to praise the style and elevation of the poet's political speeches, and the noble reasoning he brings to bear upon what M. Guizot calls "des mauvaises causes." "He upheld brilliantly that of the maternal regency, the same which at a later date he was instrumental in so tragically wrecking" (February, 1848).[1]

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[1] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. v, p. 102.

[2] Letter from Louis-Philippe to Guizot, August 9, 1842; cf. also Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. v, p. 104.

The versatility of Lamartine's talents had been still further demonstrated during the preceding session (February to May, 1842), by his speeches on the abolition of slavery (March 10); on the railway from Paris to the Mediterranean (April 30 and May 11); and a very brilliant discourse in defence of the Right of Search (May 20) which had been instituted for the suppression of the slave trade between the four Great Powers, on a basis of complete reciprocity, but the ratification of which M. Guizot's Government experienced the greatest difficulty in obtaining from the Chamber, and which, in fact, much to the Premier's humiliation, it was found necessary to withdraw owing to the temper of his country. On this occasion Lamartine, who had pleaded eloquently for the ratification of a treaty which in no way affected the national honour, as its adversaries proclaimed, based his support of the Government's action on purely humanitarian grounds. But he made no secret of the painful impression Lord Palmerston's pretensions had caused him personally, and could not forget England's slight of French susceptibilities during the recent negotiations over the Eastern Question.[2] Nevertheless, he advocated the ratification.

As might naturally have been expected, the question of literary copyright, which arose in the Chamber during the session of the preceding year, was the occasion of one of his most masterly orations. Owing to his special knowledge of the subject, Lamartine was appointed chairman of the commission which studied the technical details of the bill for the protection of intellectual property the Government was desirous of introducing. The subject was practically a new one, for the brief outline of the decrees of 1791, 1793, and 1810 afforded no substantial basis on which to construct the complicated jurisprudence necessitated by the requirements of modern times. The Government now desired to grant a period of thirty years after the death of the author, for the enjoyment by his family, or legal heirs, of all the privileges of literary and artistic copyright. After careful study Lamartine and the committee over which he presided estimated that this was not sufficient, and that equity demanded that fifty years should be allowed to elapse before the intellectual product of the writer or the artist became public property. The report which Lamartine introduced during the session of 1841[1] was an exhaustive analytical study of the question, and, but slightly modified, constitutes the basis of the law of to-day, which has admitted the equity of the fifty years claimed by the framer of the original bill.

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[1] *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de mon temps*, vol. VII, p. 30.

[2] *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 212. It was Circourt who furnished Lamartine with all his data. Cf. *Correspondance*, vol. IV, p. 147.

Prior to the official report Lamartine exchanged (through the journal "La Presse") a lengthy correspondence with M. Émile de Girardin, whose opinions on the subject were greatly at variance with those he himself held. It is in one of these letters that he makes use of an expression prophetically applicable to his own later years, "ce martyre qu'on appelle la vie d'un homme de génie."[2] Girardin advocated a system, styled by Lamartine "the expropriation of thought," which provided that during the life of an author a publisher might edit his works on payment to him, or his heirs, of one tenth of the sale price of the work. The abuses to which this radical system must inevitably give rise were so apparent that they were easily demonstrated. The matter is mentioned here merely in order to quote a characteristic phrase of Lamartine's, giving utterance to the principle which guided his political and social action through life. "Les idées radicales," he assured his correspondent, "ne résolvent rien, elles tranchent tout, comme l'épée d'Alexandre; mais, en tranchant la difficulté, elles tranchent les principes, les droits, les intérêts, et quelquefois les têtes. Ce sont les impatiences de la pensée. Le vrai génie ne blesse et ne tue rien, il organise et il réforme."[1] It would take too much space to enumerate here the arguments used to convince the Chamber of the equity of the measures the commission proposed: suffice it to say that to-day all are recognized and adopted, although seventy years ago many were considered unfeasible, and the generous efforts of the chairman were practically sterile. After the vote on the Regency, which resulted in a victory for M. Guizot's Government, Parliament was prorogued (August 29), the opening of the new session being fixed for January 9, 1843.

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[1] March 13.

[2] *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 67.

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 71.

CHAPTER XXXVII

CHURCH AND STATE

On his return to Saint-Point, Lamartine hastened to acknowledge his debt to Count de Circourt for the assistance he had lent him in the recent debate. "It is you who so admirably quarried and shaped all the stones with which I built my opinions of the Regency law: to you therefore go both glory and gratitude." [1]

Mention has been made that Cavour did not entertain admiration for the French deputy. Writing to the Comtesse de Circourt on March 15, 1844, the great Italian statesman says: "I am sorry not to be able to share any of your impressions of M. de Lamartine; but I must confess that his speech concerning the fortifications seemed to me unworthy of his talent. It is composed of a series of declamatory phrases and platitudes such as a political man of the deputy from Mâcon's worth should not presume to employ." [2] Cavour was evidently in the dark as to the part Circourt had taken in the preparation of the speech, which he considered one of his friend's "plus belles pages."[3] His admiration for Anastasie de Klustine, the friend of Bonstetten and Sismondi, when he met her in Geneva, had been sincere, and as Madame de Circourt, the charming Russian had lost nothing of her hold over the respectful devotion of the young Piedmontese, who assiduously frequented her salon in Paris. Writing to Mr. Lee-Childe, Mr. Charles Eliot Norton, criticizing Saint-Beuve's mention of the lady in his "Portraits de femmes," says: ". . . But I wish that he had drawn her character with fuller delineation of the traits that made her exceptional and gave to her so rare an attraction. I was about to write 'attractiveness,' but she had perhaps too much finesse, and her natural sentiment had been too much intellectualized to leave her this charm. Is it too subtile a distinction to say that one was attracted to her, rather than attracted by her? Are there any salons such as hers left? Is there a single salon in Paris in which 'l'intelligence donne comme droit de cité,' without question of party in politics or in philosophy?" [1]

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCXCVIII.

[2] Nigra, *Le Comte de Cavour et la Comtesse de Circourt*, p. 63.

[3] Cf. Georges Bourgin, *Souvenirs d'une mission à Berlin*, vol. I, p. xlvi.

During the parliamentary recess of 1842, Lamartine was busily engaged at Mâcon in furthering the liberally democratic principles of which he was the recognized apostle. In September we find him addressing the scholars of the normal school of his native province, telling them that they live in a democratic era: under social conditions where all are interested in moralizing, in adding strength and dignity to popular institutions; wherein a man is considered only by virtue of his morality and his intelligence, and wherein caste with its privileges and tyranny can find no place. "Light and liberty are inseparable; we desire to shed light wherever we have ventured to proclaim liberty. You are the missionaries of intelligence. Go forth in its name." [2] A few days later (September 12, 1842) it is to the members and guests of the Literary Academy of Mâcon that he preaches the gospel of human progress, with its train of industrial and commercial satellites; lauding the benefits which accrue to the masses by the introduction of machinery into the social and economic life of the country. The address contains a remark in reference to the awakening of China which is not without interest in connection with contemporaneous developments in that country. Speaking of the opium war which England had provoked, Lamartine, a confirmed optimist as we know, practically excuses it in the interests of civilization: ". . . Who knows but that the cannon fired by a merchant vessel at the beginning of the war with China has forced open the doors of a new world? Who can deny that it will perhaps unite four hundred millions of men with the great union of European peoples? And if this be the case, as I doubt not, what a future, gentlemen!"[1] And again he dwells on the necessity for the construction of the Suez Canal, "that route which shall unite two continents."

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[1] *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, vol. I, p. 62, note. Concerning Circourt's aid to Lamartine cf. also Huber-Saladin, *Le Comte de Circourt*, p. 64: ". . . Le poète devenu homme politique avait besoin, pour préparer ses discours, même les plus olympiens, de documents terrestres: c'est à l'érudition obligeante de Circourt qu'il avait recours pour nourrir de faits et de textes ses éloquents impromptus." Cf. Bourgin, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. xxv.

[2] *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 269.

Turning to the burning social problems of the day (of all time, alas!), the speaker sees in the development of industry, and the extension of State control, not the cure, but a mitigation of many social evils. In a word, he insists that politics should, by the help of science and an efficient administration, do for the people what religion has accomplished in other ways; that is to say, afford humanity relief from unnecessary sufferings, moral or physical. The political economist in Lamartine is awakened in the course of this harangue to the dangers of trades-unionism, then a mere black speck on the industrial horizon, but a speck his prophetic vision discerned with growing uneasiness. After insisting on the principle of the freedom of labour, and the benefits of open and loyal competition in all the fields of human industry, the speaker adds: "The secrets of the future are inscrutable; but according to our lights to-day, and our present knowledge, we ourselves believe that liberty still means justice, and that to dream of the forcible and arbitrary organization of labour is equivalent to dreaming of the resurrection of the castes of India, instead of the rising equality of the modern world, and of the tyranny of labour, instead of its independence and retribution according to worth." But a middle course is open to the State, he asserts, by which to regulate and define the relations between capital and labour, between the exorbitant cupidity of industrialism and the equitable claims of the elements necessary to its riches. Let the State intervene, carefully avoiding, however, any semblance of arbitrary interference between the manufacturer and the workman, between the consumer and the producer, between labour and its free remuneration. The intervention of the State should be attended with the full force of its administrative authority, but only for the protection of those in need of its aid and in accordance with the common weal. In a word, the State shall act the rôle of "that invisible Providence" to which humanity turns in times of distress and turmoil. If, carried away by the transcendentalism of this theme, the speaker (as was so often the case) weakened the practical aspect of his contention by the too profuse introduction of the abstract, the basis of his argument could scarcely be attacked. We have but to glance about us to-day to see his theories put in practice. "Cette passion de l'amélioration de l'humanité sous toutes ses formes, c'est la passion caractéristique du siècle où nous vivons." It is also the dominating note of the twentieth century: but the impulse was given by the men who, like Lamartine, sought inspiration in the eternal truths incarnated in the precepts of the Revolution of 1789, "*sainement compris et moralement considérés*," as he would have its doctrines understood. If we have dwelt at considerable length on this forgotten address, delivered before a provincial learned society, it is with two objects in view. Firstly, because the discourse provides an exceptionally clear synopsis of Lamartine's convictions on some of the social problems of the hour; and secondly, as demonstrative of eagerness to seize upon every opportunity, official and non-official, for the propaganda of the reforms it was his constant aim to make effective. The speech, or rather its principles, were attacked as revolutionary by some, as pantheistic in its philosophy by others. And yet, as Lamartine himself observes, Fénelon would not have argued otherwise, although he would have expressed himself better.[1] "*Ou servir des idées, ou rien*, voilà ma devise," he wrote the Marquis de la Grange, shortly afterwards. "Le temps ne garde mémoire que de ceux qui lui on légué quelquechose." [2] His ambition was to dower posterity with the intellectual and material franchise every man had the right to expect in a free state, administered under liberal and humane laws, no longer for the benefit of the few, but for the masses, whose claims to light and progress could no longer be ignored. Few men have followed this aim more unselfishly or at the cost of greater personal sacrifices of time and fortune: few were raised to greater heights of popular adulation, or plunged to greater depths of humiliation and despair.

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 274.

"J'aime celui qui rêve l'impossible," said Goethe. If Lamartine dreamed the unattainable, it was a noble chimera which haunted him; and he battled in a noble cause, for it was the emancipation of humanity he sought. This autumn of 1842 was a busy one, full of crowded work and play. "I have led, and am still leading, an infernal life. I have not a day of peace," wrote Lamartine to the Marquis de la Grange, from Saint-Point, on

[1] *Correspondance*, DCCC.

[2] *Ibid.*, DCCCIII.

October 5. Despite financial stringency the host had, indeed, plunged recklessly into hospitalities of all sorts. Three hundred and twelve guests attended a banquet at his expense, and from eighteen to twenty friends lodged under his roof simultaneously.[1] But although he writes Madame de Girardin, a month later, that he has given up writing verses, it was not because of the stir and bustle of his present life alone. He professes to be too old to indulge in such childishness. "La rime me fait rougir de honte. Sublime enfantillage dont je ne veux plus." [2] "Philosophy and politics," he sees nothing beyond, "et cela se fait en prose." As M. Doumic writes, henceforth action definitely takes the place of dreams. "The poet effaces himself before the orator, who stands among the greatest, and without ceasing to be an orator, becomes an historian. Out of the work accomplished in a few years, out of the historical romance and lyrical history, emanates so powerful an impetus, so great an upheaval, that a throne is overthrown and the destinies of the country are modified." [3] This is no exaggeration: within six years his prose had impelled the intellectual world to the gesture which made inevitable the popular outburst of February, 1848. "Je ferai l'insurrection de l'ennui," he threatened in his letter to Madame de Girardin, "une révolution pour secouer un cauchemar." [4] The "nightmare" was, of course, the unprogressive, not to say retrograde, policy pursued by the Guizot Ministry, whose systematic indifference to the reforms Lamartine advocated had driven him into active opposition. "Je crois l'opposition nécessaire, à grandes doses, à une situation léthargique," he told M. de Girardin; and he added that "the real dogma of his soul was written in the Revolution of fifty years ago." [1]

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCI. The occasion of these festivities was the formal inauguration of the College of Mâcon, for which the deputy had long contended with the central administration.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCII.

[3] Cf. *Lamartine*, p. 204.

[4] *Correspondance*, DCCCIII.

The elections of July, 1842, had again returned Lamartine as deputy from Mâcon; when he took his seat in January, his attack on the whole system of government, or "la pensée du règne," as he put it, made his open defection apparent.[2] Rising, on January 27 (1843), to take part in the debate on the Address, his opening words left no doubt as to what was to follow. "The honourable orator who began this discussion believes that the vice is not in the system, but in the Ministry itself. I differ entirely with the honourable gentleman, and I maintain that, in my eyes, the vice lies not in the existing Ministry, nor in the one which preceded it, nor perhaps in that destined to succeed it; the vice is to be found higher; the difficulty of the situation, the gravity of the peril to France, are to be found elsewhere, they are traceable to the entire system." [3] And he promptly announces his intention of combating, not the various paragraphs of the Address, but the whole complacent policy of the Government. Thereupon follows a species of profession of faith which presents absorbing interest. Lamartine assures his hearers that the news of the Revolution of July did not come as a surprise to him. And he goes on to state that from his earliest youth he had comprehended that the modern world could not long hesitate between the government of autocratic principles and one of liberty, between the principle which amalgamated the throne, the dynasty, and aristocracy with the great national interests, and that which separated the passing interests of the dynasty from those of the Nation at large. By implication he accused the Government of grossly violating the very principles on which it was founded; significantly adding, "Il est plus beau de se dévouer aux idées qu'aux dynasties." Up to 1834, he admits, the Government had fulfilled his expectations. After that date, selfishness, and a gradual severance from the fundamental and organic principles which had justified its birth, became ever more apparent. The first symptoms he discerned in the attempt to constitute an hereditary legislature in the Upper House; the second in the nefarious "September Laws"; the third he had fought against with all his might, for he considered the fortifications of Paris a menace to constitutional liberties. The refusal of the Government to accept the electoral reforms which he had advocated so strongly in the previous session was a grievance he could not overlook; while after the attempt to cheat the country out of what he considered a sacred right (the legislation concerning the regency), no doubt remained in his mind as to the road they meant to follow.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCV.

[2] Cf. Deschanel, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 147.

[3] *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 288.

Turning to the foreign policy pursued since Casimir Périer's death (1832), he pointed out the long series of mistakes which had resulted in the practical diplomatic isolation to which France was now condemned. On all sides he detected weakness and even bad faith; a tendency towards retrogression, and the sacrifice of the liberalism on which the fundamental principles of the new monarchy rested. "Vous osez nier le feu, la main sur le volcan!" he cries. "Vous osez nier la force invincible de l'idée démocratique, un pied sur ses débris!" Without questioning the patriotism of the men in power, or of the Conservative Party in Parliament, the speaker tells them that they are endeavouring "to build with rotten materials, with dead issues, and not with the live ideas which hold the future in their grasp." The statesmen to whom it is given to found durable institutions must not only be endowed with prescience; they must possess the gift of immolation of self in the fundamental ideas of their time. Such men are to be found in France, and out of these elements will be formed the loyal opposition he, the speaker, is determined to construct; the nucleus of which, in fact, already exists in constitutional opposition in the Chamber. Thoroughly aware of the misinterpretations, the insinuations and calumnies, to which his course will give rise, Lamartine professes himself prepared to brave the storm, and let his life answer for the sincerity of his purpose.

The peroration of his impassioned denunciation of the system hitherto followed by a government owing its origin to the principles it now sought to emasculate, left no doubt in the minds of his hearers as to the course Lamartine would adopt. The effect produced by the frank and powerful censure was very considerable.[1] The whole country was aroused, and Lamartine's attitude was subjected to varying criticism, although, on the whole, his magnificent courage was accorded the admiration it deserved. To whatever party they belonged, thinking men in France recognized that a power to be reckoned with was in their midst. It was on leaving the Chamber where he had assisted at this debate that Baron von Humboldt exclaimed: "M. de Lamartine est une comète dont on n'a pas encore calculé l'orbite." Lamartine himself was very confident of the rôle he was to play when the storm broke. A couple of days afterwards he informed M. Ronot that three hundred and fourteen letters had reached him from the departments, all expressing "fanatisme, entraînement, et enthousiasme"; and, he continues, in five years France will have accepted his ideas. "Souvenez-vous-en, et moquez-vous de ceux qui se moquent de *moi*. Je ne suis rien, mais les situations en politique comme à la guerre sont toutes-puissantes. Or, j'ai l'œil qui sait les voir de loin et le pied qui ose hardiment s'y poser." [1] To those who pointed out to him the number of influential men his policy was alienating, Saint-Beuve affirms that Lamartine replied: "What does that matter to me? The women and young men are with me: I can dispense with the rest." [2]

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[1] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. v, p. 149.

But the position he had now made for himself, satisfactory as it was, required in Lamartine's opinion to be strengthened through the action of the press. For years past he had sighed for the possession of a newspaper by means of which the propagation of his political and social views could reach the ear of the great public outside the Chamber. At first he had considered the advisability of purchasing a paper in Paris, but on careful consideration it seemed preferable to edit the journal from the morally neutral ground of the provinces, far removed from the passions and prejudices of the national capital. In August, 1843, the project took definite shape, and Lamartine, having called together at Saint-Point several of his young neighbours, disclosed to them his ideas. Among those who responded to the summons were Henri de Lacretelle, Léon Bruys d'Ouilly, to whom was addressed the Lettre Préface of the "Recueillements poétiques" (1839), M. de Champvans, and Charles Rolland. To these devoted fellow-workers, of whose sympathy with the democratic principles which foreshadowed the Republic there could be no doubt, their host unfolded the scope of the independent paper to be called "Le Bien Public" ("The Public Weal"). He did not conceal from them the fact that considerable pecuniary sacrifice would be necessitated by the establishment of the philanthropic venture, and professed himself willing to contribute generously to the enterprise.[1] "What is the meaning of all our revolutions during the last sixty years?" he asked his friends when explaining the scheme. "It is the pursuit of a single idea, and all these changes are only different phases of one and the same revolution. France desires a rational government, which shall call, without distinction of class, to the exercise of power those men best fitted by intellect and character; she wants a government which shall spread its beneficent effects over all; she insists on applying to political life the doctrines of social charity. Until the aim is attained revolutions will follow their course, at times stormy, at others peaceful, according to the obstacles or facilities found on their passage. Let it be our task to furnish a harbour where vital, but not necessarily tumultuous, ideals may find shelter. As with the fertilizing waters of the Nile, a deposit will be formed, out of which will be created the rich harvests of liberty." [2] Flowery as his language was, his hearers shared his convictions and their youthful enthusiasm equalled his own. Not only did they warmly embrace his ideals, however, but each subscribed a thousand francs to the fund, to which Lamartine himself contributed ten thousand.[3] Fired by the knowledge that their chief's literary productions commanded what for the time were considered fabulous prices, his aides had little doubt that the enterprise would prove a highly remunerative one.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCX.

[2] *Causeries du lundi*, vol. XI, p. 462. Cited also by Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. V, p. 149, who sees in his attitude a desire to offer a distraction and an emotion to those whom he had assured that "La France est une nation qui s'ennuie."

"Le Bien Public" created a considerable stir, and certain articles attributed to Lamartine were widely copied throughout France, and even Europe. As was to be expected, not only the Government, but the whole régime was attacked with the same energy as in the Chamber. "What principles have you left standing?" the indignant journalist demands in one of the early issues of his paper. "In the place of a democracy, an oligarchy; instead of equality, an elective nobility; in lieu of royalty whose head is chief magistrate, a dynastic royalty; instead of the freedom of the press, the 'Laws of September,' etc., etc." Nevertheless, as Lamartine clearly defined this policy of opposition in his open letter to M. de Champvans, editor of "Le Bien Public" (August 7, 1843), his intention was not perpetually to thwart the Government, but gradually to direct the course of public opinion towards an appreciation of popular liberties. But it was in a speech on June 4, 1843, at the banquet offered him by the city of Mâcon, that he most distinctly foreshadowed the transformation of the Royalist into the popular tribune of five years later. The oration is one long glorification of democracy. But although the speaker vaunts the beauties of government of the people by the people, he condemns with severity the excesses which an untrained conception of liberty has produced in the past, and may repeat in the future. So long as a liberal constitutional monarchy fulfils the needs of the Nation which gave it birth; so long as a government is only an instrument in the hands of the Nation for the propaganda of the ideals and interests which must triumph; so long must it be preserved. But should the government fail in the mission confided to it by the Nation: should it turn against the ideals the Nation has set up, against the People, then — "But do not let us pronounce the terrible word Revolution! Nothing justifies it but inexorable necessity."[1] The fundamental ideal of today is the future of the people; in one word, the future of democracy, he assures his hearers. Democracy unites France; those in power wish to divide her. Therein lies the danger to the existing Government: to embrace the popular conception of the union of all classes of citizens is, perhaps, the only salvation of the Government. "Le temps des masses approche, et je m'en réjouis; mais il faut que leur avénement soit régulier pour être durable." And, lifting his glass, the orator proposes the following toast: "À l'accomplissement régulier et pacifique des destinées de la Démocratie."[1]

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[1] Lacretelle states that *Le Bien Public* cost Lamartine over fifteen thousand francs a year. Cf. *Lamartine et ses amis*, p. 76.

[2] Lacretelle, *op. cit.*, p. 67; cf. also open letter to editor of *Le Bien Public*, *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 397.

[3] Lacretelle, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 373.

In this speech may be discerned, five years in advance, the germs and the moral causes of the Revolution of 1848 which swept away the Government he so mercilessly attacked, and set up in its place the democracy whose triumph Lamartine had prognosticated with marvellous accuracy.[2]

Shelley has said that "Poets are the acknowledged legislators of the world": the axiom is susceptible of question; but the ancients were right in considering them as soothsayers. Lamartine's whole political career had been one which could not fail to appeal to those who had the popular cause deeply at heart. In 1843, M. Chapuys-Montlaville, a patriot whose sympathy with the people was unchallenged, extolled the civic virtues of the member for Mâcon, and welcomed him within the democratic fold, prophesying that he would become their leader.[3]

Yet despite this apparent radicalism, it would be a mistake to assume that, at this period, any considerable following could have been found in the Chamber for those advocating extreme measures. The contest of rival statesmen and parliamentary parties was like that of the Whigs and Tories in England. They sought, in different degrees, the liberty of the press and of associations, the extension of the franchise, and economy in the public establishments: but all (or nearly all) were faithful to the Monarchy and to the Constitution.[1] Lamartine was certainly not prepared to counsel demolition before he had the material for reconstruction at hand. It was evolution, not revolution, by means of which he sought to attain his end. "Le Bien Public" had been founded to aid this propaganda, and both Lamartine and Dargaud made use of its vehicle to spread abroad the doctrines they advocated. Lamartine's articles on "The State, the Church, and Education" had inflamed public opinion, and the ecclesiastical authorities, in order to counterbalance modernist influences, felt constrained to take action. The Bishop of Autun, near Mâcon, issued a pastoral letter to his clergy containing certain disciplinary measures in connection with dogma, and demanding the unrestricted and unquestioning submission of the local priests. Counselled by Lamartine and Dargaud, and encouraged in his action by Champvans, the Abbé Thyons refused to accede to the Bishop's exactions, and was consequently suspended from his sacred functions. The rights and wrongs of the controversy are too technical for analysis here, the affair being mentioned merely on account of Lamartine's connection with it. Suffice it to say that "Le Bien Public," and the Liberal press of the entire country, seized upon the incident to support the theory of liberty of conscience. There is no doubt that the Abbé Thyons' eloquent protest against the action of his superior was inspired, even dictated, by Lamartine.[1] "L'Abbé Thyons semblait avoir respiré les souffles et les pensées de Jocelyn," wrote Lacretelle, and it is certain that in defending his humble friend Lamartine did nothing more than put in practice the philosophy he upheld in his famous poem. Be this as it may, the purity of Lamartine's motives cannot be doubted. In philosophy as in politics it was the higher object he sought, the ultimate good of mankind, the emancipation of religion from the trammels of dogma. All who approached the man agree concerning his personal vanity — a vanity almost puerile in its naïveté: none honestly doubted the unselfishness of his aims. "Je travaille pour Dieu," he wrote M. Dessertaux early in 1843, "and not for a miserable worm such as I am. I seek to discover the best road to bring men back to Him, and to prevent their stumbling back to darkness. This is the whole secret of my so-called evolutions, which, whatever the public may think, are logical sequences with me." And turning to mundane politics, he asserts his determination to lead the Government to the acceptance of the great social reforms the century demands, "without revolutionary excesses." Nevertheless, he admits that revolutions seem to him inevitable in consequence of the faults committed. If this must be, he does not wish to have hastened the hour. "I know what an unleashed populace means. I will oppose it to the utmost of my power."[2]

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 385.

[2] Deschanel, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 150.

[3] Cf. *Lamartine, vie publique et privée*, p. 127. Of this little work Lamartine wrote: ". . . J'aurai la biographie de Chapuys-Montlaville: je vais me connaître; c'est de la rhétorique bienveillante. Je lirai ma biographie aux champs." (Lettre à M. Chapuys-Montlaville.) Cf. Alexandre, *Souvenirs sur Lamartine*, p. 29; also *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 386.

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[1] Cf. Sir Thomas May, *Democracy in Europe*, vol. II, p. 258.

"Lamartine est en pleine audace," wrote Alexandre. "He has declared himself the partisan of the separation of Church and State."[3] Stupendous as the position seemed, it was but the logical sequence of the politics he had made his own. When this epoch-making thesis became known to the public, few were surprised. "L'État, l'Église, et l'Enseignement" had been in preparation for a long time. The temperance of its utterances may have displeased Dargaud, but the substance made it clear that its author was thoroughly in earnest. As has been said, Lamartine was educated in part at the Jesuit college of Belley, in Savoy, and passed there some of the happiest years of his youth. Nevertheless, grateful as he was for the benefits he had received, he was not in favour of confiding the education of modern youth to the clergy. ". . . Je déteste la théocratie," he wrote in 1847, "parcequ'elle revendique la tyrannie au nom du Dieu de liberté. . . ." [1] Deep-seated as were his religious convictions, the statesman within him could not be blind to the dangers which beset all liberty of conscience when the Church interfered with temporal affairs. Hitherto Lamartine, although undeniably influenced by his philosophical and political environment, had remained outwardly in accord with the family traditions and the friendships of his youth. After 1840, his father being dead, and the loss of his lifelong friend Virieu having overtaken him, he began to break away from the past. The axis becomes displaced; the influences of his environment are most apparent; his intimate friend is Dargaud, practically a free-thinker and an advanced liberal. He is surrounded by independent thinkers such as Quinet, Michelet, Lamennais, Lacretelle, Pelletan, and others whose religious and political creeds are widely at variance with the type of conservatism family traditions have inculcated. "Until 1841, Lamartine's ideals rather than his sentiments incline him to the Left; after 1841, it is his sentiments more than his ideals which draw him to the Left." [2]

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[1] Cf. Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 356. This author affirms that Lamartine wrote the protest himself. Cf. also Lacretelle, *op. cit.*, p. 73, who dates the incident 1844, while Des Cognets (who is probably correct) insists that it took place in 1846.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCXIII.

[3] *Souvenirs sur Lamartine*, p. 50.

As with politics, so with dogma. Giordano Bruno asserted long ago: "La religion est l'ombre de la vérité, mais elle n'est pas contraire à la vérité." [1] Metaphysically Lamartine was in harmony with the philosopher of Nola: the Christianity of the Church contained nothing contrary to truth, but the dogma with which Rome had overlaid the essential verities obscured their comprehension, and retarded the spiritual evolution of humanity. According to Lamartine's philosophy two fundamental laws govern the universe: the law of repose and that of action. He believed the times in which he lived demanded a preponderance of the latter: the "law of renovation," as he terms it in a letter to Virieu, written in 1835.[2] It would be impossible to overestimate the importance he attached to the question. His private letters demonstrate the anguish of soul the problem caused him, for he realized that the childish faith of his fathers must suffer by the introduction of the rationalism his theories demanded. Rationalism as he understood it was, however, far removed from the scepticism of to-day. To him the term implied adoration of the Deity bereft of the symbolism of dogma, a distinction so subtle as almost to defy analysis. The sincerity of his apparent emancipation has been questioned; even emphatically denied. M. Henri Cochin, an impeccable authority on that portion of Lamartine's political career which had the French Flanders as its centre, throws a doubt on the disinterestedness of the poet's metaphysical evolution. "He desired political success," asserts M. Cochin, "and at that time as to-day, to secure a commanding position religious ideals had to be sacrificed." [3]

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[1] *Les Confidences*, book XI, p. 317.

[2] Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

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[1] Born at Nola, *circa* 1550; burnt at the stake in Rome.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCXVII.

[3] Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 134; also Maurice Barrès, "L'Abdication du Poète," a series of articles in *Écho de Paris*, April 11–30, 1913. This author hints at the connection of Dargaud with Freemasonry, and at Lamartine's sympathy with the society.

To those who have followed his psychological evolution it will be clear, however, that in spite of the latitude of his opinions as to dogma, to Lamartine an irreligious government was an inconceivable anomaly. But he had early recognized the evils resulting from too close association between the State and the Church. If religion was an indispensable factor in the composition of his ideal body politic, an inseparable element of his social philosophy, he unhesitatingly condemned the intrusion of a dogmatic theocracy in temporal affairs as irreconcilable with the development of human thought. Theoretically democratic, the Church was in practice an aristocratic hierarchy arrogating to itself alone the government of the human conscience. Before the Revolution monarchical Europe was the handiwork of Catholicism: politics had been fashioned in the image of the Church; authority was founded on a mystery; right came from on high; power, like faith, was reputed divine.[1] But the principles of 1789 had freed the people from this universal subservience to the right divine, or rather had invested man, individually and collectively, with the attributes hitherto monopolized by the few. The monarchy founded by the people in 1830 owed nothing to a mystic origin such as its predecessors had claimed, but it owed everything to the democratic principle which had given it birth. That the Church of Rome should be allowed a voice in the administration of the temporal affairs of a government which professed to have broken with the past, constituted not only a political anachronism, but a menace to the liberty of the citizen. As was his wont, Lamartine approached the issue in a spirit of moderation and with every desire for the conciliation of the interests involved. His pamphlets on the subject showed no iconoclastic or radical determination to sweep away suddenly the century-old institutions which no longer accorded with the ideals of modern progress.[1] Respectful veneration for a power which had usefully served humanity marked his every utterance. But, as he had told Virieu, renovation could not be grafted on the past: the new spirit must be met with fresh ideals, the new philosophy be inaugurated on an honestly democratic basis affording every class of society opportunities for the fulfilment of individual destinies.

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[1] Cf. *Histoire des Girondins*, vol. 1, p. 23.

Before his entry into public life Lamartine had advocated the separation of Church and State. In the "Politique rationnelle" (1831) he wrote that it was "a fortunate and incontestable necessity in a time when power belonged to all and not the few." No creed could be granted exclusive privileges. In the same pamphlet he had dwelt at considerable length on the advantages of free and untrammelled education for all classes, asserting that any restrictions imposed on the liberty of teaching constituted a moral attack on the privileges of a free people.[2] The conflict between the clergy and the universities had now (1843) reached an acute stage. The State accused the Church of warping the conscience of youth, and unfitting those who had passed through the mill of its educational system for the acceptance of the duties of free citizens. To these reproaches the Church retorted that the universities were accountable for the spread of atheism. Strange as it must appear, M. Guizot, himself a Protestant, professed to see no danger to the State in the education imparted by the priests, and was in favour of the passing of a bill calculated to increase rather than diminish the influence of the Church over higher education.

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[1] "L'État, l'Église, et l'Enseignement" (November 26 and 30, 1843); cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, pp. 465–91.

[2] *Sur la politique rationnelle*, p. 69.

Lamartine threw himself heart and soul into the camp which fought for the unconditional freedom of education, and seized the opportunity to point out at the same time the mutual advantage to both parties, by going a step farther and dissolving the pact which bound their material interests. The problem of free education was, he maintained, inextricably interwoven with the religious question. The Concordat of Napoleon I bound together France and Rome. The evils resultant from this fact fell alike on Church and State. Neither enjoyed the liberty to which it was entitled, and each was continually trespassing on the prerogatives of the other. The Church complained that the university, representing the State, robbed her of the fruits of the educational system she pursued, and corrupted with lay doctrines the spiritual teachings she had inculcated; that by insisting upon the right of State examinations before admitting candidates to the public service, the authority of the ecclesiastical instructors was impaired. To which the State replied, that, as the Church was free to preach her dogma, the State was also free to insist upon the acceptance of the moral principles upon which its existence was founded. Lamartine pointed out with force the incompatibility of the system with the requirements of human progress, and urged the gradual and equitable disassociation of two principles whose mutual value to mankind necessitated the separation of their reciprocal material interests. More generous than the late M. Combes, he advocated the maintenance of the *status quo* until the gradual extinction by death of the present ecclesiastical incumbents, who to the end should receive from the State the salaries and emoluments to which they were entitled. Thus, the disestablishment accomplished without detriment to the individual members of a considerable class of society, the Church might teach her faith, and the State inculcate unhindered the principles of civic virtue it deemed indispensable for the public weal. "The Church will be emancipated from the Government, the Government emancipated from the Church, and philosophy emancipated from both. Souls will be relieved from their dependence on the budget and confided to their faith and to God." [1]

Unquestionably Lamartine firmly believed that the adoption of his solution of the problem would benefit both Church and State — that if the State was a decided gainer by the transaction, the Church would be no loser, might even find it to her material advantage to be free from the trammels of State supervision and control. But those who had inspired Lamartine, and who had egged him on to the public expression of his secret convictions, knew better. Dargaud, whose personal animosity to theocracy was deep-seated and often violent, saw the far-reaching consequences of this estrangement between the civil and spiritual powers which struggled for the possession of the human conscience. "On a tenté une chose qui pourrait avoir de l'avenir," he wrote in his diary. "On a demandé la séparation de l'Église et de l'État . . . *quelques-uns seulement savent ce qu'il font.* Moi, je vois clairement. Le clergé le voit aussi, et il recule devant son divorce avec l'État et la suppression de la subvention religieuse." [2] The author of "The History of Religious Liberty," philosopher and Deist that he was, foresaw what was to take place in our times: at first an increase of revenues to the religious associations, prompted by the sympathies of those who considered that the Church had been despoiled of its sacred rights. This sentiment, however, must soon be followed by the progressive apathy of the faithful. M. des Cognets believes that

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 487.

[2] Cf. Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

Lamartine himself began to realize that he was being made a tool of, and made to embrace an extreme policy of which he could not approve. "On utilisera l'ascendant qu'il a conquis par ses poésies religieuses sur les âmes des catholiques pour déconcerter les résistances. Pendant ce temps, derrière lui, à l'ombre de sa gloire, on préparera l'arme avec laquelle on espère porter à l'Église le coup mortel." [1]

Was Lamartine the dupe of this Machiavelian plot? That he was influenced by Dargaud's persuasive philosophy none can for a moment doubt. That he was swayed in matters of minor importance by the liberalism (to use a euphemistic term) of Dargaud's argumentation is frequently apparent. But the present issue was one he had deeply pondered before he made the personal acquaintance of this *alter ego*, who during the eighteen years of his political activity was his constant companion and trusted confidant. As has been seen, the "Politique rationnelle" specifically recognizes the advantages — nay, the necessity — of the separation of the spiritual and temporal powers in a free State, and his private letters refer again and again to the liberty of conscience a true appreciation of the "Religion of Reason" must entail. If he hesitated to take the plunge himself, if he procrastinated definite and conclusive action (and all this he most assuredly did), it was not because his personal convictions wavered, but because of the (for the times) frankly revolutionary character of the measure. His revolt was not against religion, for, although his orthodoxy was, as has been seen, extremely doubtful, his quarrel was with the self-constituted hierarchy which in the name of Catholic dogma sought to impose limitations to human thought. The revolt of Lamennais against the tyranny of Rome appealed irresistibly to the author of "Jocelyn" and "La Chute d'un Ange," whose ideals of Christian socialism had, perhaps, found their birth in the "Essai sur l'Indifférence en matière de religion." [1]

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[1] Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

The absolute liberty of education had been one of the formal promises contained in the Charter of 1830, and by liberty of education was understood the free and open competition of all authorized schools to whatever denomination they belonged, exclusive of monopoly or privilege, avowed or disguised.[2] But to the State belonged the right of judging of the guarantees of capacity or morality offered by the educational establishments and the masters employed. The Society of Jesus, recognized as a danger to the State, was legally unauthorized, as a decree of dissolution of the Order in France was pending.[3] M. Guizot, unwilling to aggravate the contest between the Church and State by the direct application of the law against the Jesuits, had recourse to diplomacy to induce the Holy See to counsel the voluntary retirement of the followers of Loyola. For this purpose an Italian political refugee, Count Pellegrino Rossi, who had distinguished himself as a professor of Constitutional Law, and had been made a French peer, was selected by M. Guizot as diplomatic representative to the Vatican (1845). Count Rossi was successful in his mission, obtaining from Pope Gregory XVI, just prior to his death, the desired dissolution of the Jesuit educational establishments in France.[4]

Although one cause of the trouble between Church and

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[1] Cf. C. Maréchal, *Lamennais et Lamartine*, pp. 303, 319.

[2] Cf. Guizot, *Mémoires*, vol. VII, p. 376 *et seq.*

[3] The original decree of expulsion, dated June 22, 1804, under the Empire, had been maintained by the Governments of the Restoration and of 1830.

[4] Guizot, *op. cit.*, p. 431; cf. also Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. V, p. 567, who insists that the victory was only a partial one. Count Rossi, after the Revolution of 1848, reassumed his Italian nationality and was appointed Minister of the Interior under Pius IX. He was assassinated in Rome in 1848.

State was removed, the battle still raged furiously, as both the ecclesiastic and the civil authorities maintained their pretensions. On one side the universities, on the other the seminaries, professors, and priests, hurled accusations of materialism or bigotry with equal violence. Undoubtedly abuses existed. Sainte-Beuve, who was no fanatic, wrote, in 1843, that the majority of the University professors, without being hostile to religion, were not religious. The pupils were affected by the prevailing atmosphere and left the estates of learning, if not anti-Christians, at least tainted with indifference towards religion.[1] .On the other hand, as Lamartine had justly observed, the Church already occupied a unique position. "Elle est la seule grande association autorisée, protégée et salariée dans le pays: une nation dans une nation, un État dans l'État; une société à part de la société civile.."[2] This dual control of the public conscience was intolerable alike to Church and to State, perpetually at war in defence of their individual prerogatives. With Cavour, Lamartine sighed for a "free Church in a free State": the two great social institutions liberated from the iron fetters which bound their manifest incompatibilities. "Il n'y a pas de paix, sachez-le bien," he warned the Chamber on May 3, 1845, "que dans la liberté des cultes; il n'y a de paix que dans la séparation graduelle, successive, dans le relâchement systématique et général des liens qui unissent l'Église à l'État. . . ." [3] With the separation of Church and State the vexed problem of the freedom of education found its natural evolution, for the friction between the elements disputing the moral possession of the citizen ceased to exist. The State was no longer authorized to exercise control over the religious conscience of the individual, nor could the Church insist on its exclusive right to mould the future citizen during the earlier years of his mental development. To the family was accorded the option of the mode of youthful training to be followed, while the State reserved its ultimate appreciation of the capability offered by the candidate for public employment.

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[1] *Chroniques Parisiennes*, pp. 100, 122.
[2] *La France parlementaire*, vol. III, p. 469.
[3] "Sur la Liberté des Cultes," *La France parlementaire*, vol. IV, p. 169.

Lamartine foresaw that the solution which he proposed of the vexed university question would meet with the dogged opposition of two classes at least of electors: those who sought to abase religion by making of it a political instrument; and those who would fain see the State under the thumb of the clergy. But he was himself convinced that a frank and loyal separation of the two great levers of human energy was the only means of obtaining mutual individual freedom, together with the moral and intellectual progress demanded by the social conditions of the age. As was to be expected, the very equity of his proposals raised a storm of protest. From Court circles to the fringes of the conservative bourgeoisie, by Legitimists and Liberals alike, vituperation was poured upon him. Denounced as a Jesuit in disguise and an enemy of all religion, an atheist, and an infidel, his pamphlet entitled "L'État, l'Église et l'Enseignement," nevertheless carried weight with thinkers in both camps. But Lamartine was in advance of his time, and it was decreed that over half a century must elapse before France shook off the fetters which bound State and Church, and proclaimed the divorce which was to liberate her from the entangling Concordat of Napoleon I.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE HISTORY OF THE GIRONDINS

ALTHOUGH Lamartine had spent a goodly portion of 1843 away from Paris and personal contact with the political passions which swayed the metropolis, "Le Bien Public" had kept him in touch with the controversies of the hour. To these political activities had recently been added occupations of a purely literary character, destined, however, to exercise an incalculable, although indirect, political influence. The composition of the "Histoire des Girondins" was begun during the late spring of 1843, and undertaken, there is little doubt, with the hope of relieving the financial stringency and permitting the continuance of his accustomed mode of living. The departure was a new one: "Je n'ai rien gravé de ce style," the author informed Dargaud.[1] The first volume of the "Histoire des Girondins" was finished towards the middle of October; but the author soon realized that the magnitude of the task he had embarked upon would require at least five volumes.[2] The composition, together with the necessary studies and researches for this monumental work, occupied the greater part of the succeeding three years, but not to the exclusion of his public duties, although for the nonce he took a less prominent part in debate. Financial difficulties kept him at Mâcon until early in 1844. "I am not ruined," he wrote the Marquis de la Grange, "but harassed by expenses and debts." [3] If the settlements he had in progress could be brought to a successful termination, however, he hoped to be financially independent within the next four years. "During these four years I have need of all my intelligence and all my energy not to be shipwrecked within sight of port," he adds, meaning by this that to his pen must he trust to extricate him from the distressing situation in which he found himself. It was, therefore, for these considerations, as much as "to increase his intellectual capital as a politician and as an orator," [1] that he plunged into an enterprise which from the outset promised large pecuniary returns.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCXVII.

[2] As a matter of fact eight, to which was added, twenty years later, a volume of criticism.

[3] *Correspondance*, DCCCXXIV.

Despite literary labours into which he threw himself with ever-increasing zeal, and the financial embarrassments which beset him, Lamartine again took up his parliamentary duties, in January, 1844, with unimpaired vigour. It is probable that the sojourn in Paris was made possible by a loan from the Marquis de la Grange, for in a letter, written the first days of January, Lamartine regrets his inability to return to his post, stating that he could only leave Mâcon had he five or six thousand francs in his purse, but that he does not see whence they are to come. A few days later (January 10) he writes the same friend thanking him for a great service rendered and adding, "I accept with a feeling of gratitude only equalled by my attachment"; and goes on to say that within a fortnight he will be in Paris.[2] Be this as it may, he was in his seat in the Chamber for the debate on the Address, and on January 28 delivered a speech advocating the rescindment of a phrase casting blame upon certain Legitimist deputies who had gone to London to offer their respects to the Duc de Bordeaux, head of the dethroned Bourbons of the elder branch.[3] Although couched in moderate and uncompromising language, the sentiments expressed in this defence of the liberty of political sympathies leave little doubt as to the evolution of the speaker's personal opinions, and of the road he will follow.

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[1] Cf. Lady Domville, *Lamartine*, p. 253.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCXXIV.

[3] Known later as the Comte de Chambord, styled Henri V.

The shifting of party interests, and the *rapprochement* between Thiers and Odilon Barrot, seemed to Lamartine to offer a larger place for an independent organ such as "Le Bien Public," and it would appear that he seriously contemplated transplanting the newspaper to Paris.[1] A closer study of the question, however, demonstrated the disadvantages of such action, which must have necessitated a very considerable financial outlay, and with his customary optimism Lamartine turned to the far greater perspectives offered by the purchase of a well-established Parisian journal. Fortunately the seven hundred thousand francs necessary for this enterprise were not forthcoming, for it is certain that dismal failure awaited shareholders who entrusted their capital to the commercial acumen of a political and social reformer such as the deputy from Mâcon.

But Lamartine was doing splendid work for his constituents, nevertheless. The projected line of railway from Paris to Lyons, and eventually to Marseilles, was under consideration. Various routes were proposed, and as is inevitable in such enterprises, conflicting local interests complicated and delayed the execution of the scheme. Lamartine had the promise that this important line should pass through his native town, and geographical as well as economic considerations lent weight to the demands of his fellow-citizens. Nevertheless, the matter still hung in the balance, and it required great skill and patience to overcome the hesitation and frank opposition of parties, or of colleagues whose discomfiture meant political antagonism. Hopeful in the earlier stages of the negotiations, Lamartine never concealed the difficulties of the situation, and his correspondence with M. de Champvans and others clearly demonstrates the efforts he made at this period. From the incipient stage of railway construction in France, Lamartine had been an enthusiastic supporter of the new mode of locomotion, and used every means at his disposal to dispel the prejudices of those who decried the innovation. Unlike M. Thiers, who prophesied that the trains would frighten the cows and deprive France of milk, he foresaw the immense economic advantages of transportation by rail; and he went so far as to proclaim the abolition of war and the universal brotherhood of man, by means of this facile intercommunication between peoples hitherto kept apart owing to the difficulties and dangers of travel. The prolongation of the line from Châlons to Mâcon occupied the greater part of his time during the session of 1844, his efforts being eventually crowned with success.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCXXVI.

He found leisure, however, for an eloquent appeal on the question of prisons, pleading with force and conviction against the system of solitary confinement in cases of long detention, and urging the more humane principle of deportation.[1] "Here is a speech, and a famous one! as they say at Milly, on prisons. . . . Never was a greater or for me more unexpected triumph in the Chamber. . . . The law was lost, and I resuscitated it for a few days by inserting deportation, without which it was valueless. . . . The House was more impressed than I have ever seen it, both friends and foes. I have been sleepless, and am fagged out." [2] In truth, rarely has a more pathetic appeal been made for more lenient legislation towards criminals, or a more thoroughly sensible one from the social and economic point of view. The suggestions would stand to-day as models for the reform of the systems prevalent in many so-called civilized lands. The moral aspect of the question is faced without flinching, and there is a total absence of the mere sentimentality so often discernible in like pleas. Exhorting his hearers to clemency, he reminds them that the century in which they live is destined to great moral and material achievement. "Imprint these weighty matters with a religious and human character, and let your passage on these benches be marked by the immense benefit which must accrue by the substitution of the penitentiary and regenerating system for that of a corruptive imprisonment, dangerous for society and degrading to humanity." [1]

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. IV, p. 45; speech of May 7, 1844.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCXXXI.

There is noticeable in Lamartine's writings and utterances of this period a certain lassitude, which amounts at moments almost to discouragement. One is conscious that the man feels the weight of the burden pressing upon his shoulders. An optimist always, there is nevertheless discernible between the lines of his correspondence a certain secret anxiety concerning not only his private affairs, but the drift of the public policy which, in a sense, he had made his own. An accredited member of the opposition, he is frankly dissatisfied with the influence the party exerts, one might almost say their *lack* of influence in the Chamber. He would appear, moreover, temporarily at least, to experience a certain hesitancy concerning the quality of the literary work on which he is engaged ("Les Girondins"). Considering the magnitude of the issue at stake — reëstablishment of his domestic budget — moments of despondency and lack of self-confidence are admissible even in a nature such as his. Nevertheless, such faltering is rare in his maturer years, although frequent in his youth, and one realizes that physical suffering is not totally unaccountable for the psychological phenomenon. "J'écris chaque matin des pages nouvelles de mon histoire," he writes Dargaud. "Je ferai ainsi toute l'année, *nulla dies sine linea.* Mais vraiement se sont des lignes."[1] Progress was slow on the book; he was out of conceit with the political rôle he was allowed to play; his world was out of gear. "Le monde ne veut pas de moi," he sadly adds, experiencing for once the weariness of soul every social reformer must suffer when confronted with the indifference or bitter antagonism of those to whom he had looked for aid and sympathy. Was it for this reason that a trip to Marseilles was suddenly arranged at the end of July, 1844? Were it not for the fact that the prolongation of the expedition to Naples and Ischia was an afterthought, owing to lack of suitable accommodations at Marseilles, one might discern the longing to break with the present, and refresh his soul in the haunts of his careless youth. At any rate, accompanied by his wife, his sister, Madame de Cessiat, and his nieces, Lamartine took steamer at Marseilles and tarried a month in the delicious island where he had spent so many happy days thirty years before.

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. IV, p. 64.

The change would seem to have done him good, for he returned to France refreshed in mind and body, and settled down at Monceau, whence, within a couple of months, issued an acrimonious political résumé of his recent speeches and writings entitled "Recapitulation."[2] This document, although not one of the happiest which has fallen from Lamartine's pen, furnishes, nevertheless, an important clue to his personal opinions at a period when faith in the destinies of his country was at a low ebb. "France is revolutionary or nothing," he wrote. "The revolution of '89 is her political religion. Should she relinquish the dogmas, pervert the principles, or indefinitely postpone the practical issues at stake, she stultifies herself; she remains little more than the slave of 1815, the great repentant nation craving pardon for the prejudices she destroyed, seeking forgiveness of the thrones she humbled, of Europe for her victories." And he discerns in this rôle it is desired to have France play, the hand of the retrograde policies sanctioned by the Legislative Chamber during the last few years.[1] But the accusations lose force by reason of their too general character. One scents, for the first time, an accent of personal aggressiveness, a petulancy amounting almost to peevishness, characteristics far removed from the dignified rebuke we have been accustomed to encounter in Lamartine's most energetic remonstrances against abuses of the prerogatives of Crown and Administration. It is an attack on what the author calls the "system"; in other words, the whole Government of Louis-Philippe, past, present, and future. It does not come within the province of this study to analyze the abuses of which Lamartine complains. Attention is drawn to this document merely as exemplifying the nature of the motives of his discontent, and the issues which guided him into the ever-broadening road of open and active opposition. Much was rotten in the State; the "intrigue of Thiers and the weakness of M. Barrot" [2] justified in a sense the pessimism apparent in Lamartine's political prognostication in this document. But the note of personal discontent is evident, and, as has been said, it attenuates the force of the authentic and legitimate complaints it contains.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCXLIII.

[2] Published in *Le Bien Public*, of November 22, 1844.

Here and there, in his confidential correspondence at this period, there crops up a passing reference to some political combination with Thiers, by virtue of which he *might* accept a seat in the Cabinet. There is no doubt that the persistent refusal of Louis-Philippe to utilize his talents greatly chagrined him. Laughingly he was wont to assert that there was only one ministerial portfolio he had any ambition to possess — that of Public Opinion! Sainte-Beuve believes that he would never have been satisfied with the routine of a Government office: what he longed for was a "storm in order that the lightning of his heroism might dazzle the world." [1] Unbounded confidence in his genius for great political deeds he certainly possessed, and he was to give proof of his power over a turbulent mob on occasions many times renewed. Meanwhile he chafed over the political inaction to which he was condemned. "The country is dead," he wrote De Circourt in July, 1845; "rien ne peut le galvaniser qu'une crise. Comme honnête homme je la redoute, comme philosophe je la désire." [2] But for the present he did nothing to provoke the crisis he felt it was imperative the country should traverse. His speeches and writings during the years 1845 and 1846, although dealing with an infinity of topics, are more objective than subjective in their essence, and the distinctly combative note is more frequently absent than in the past. Whether he is dealing with the conversion of the funds and kindred economic questions, or taking part in discussions relative to the foreign policy of the Government, the academic is discernible to the exclusion of the personal note of impassioned conviction.

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[1] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. IV, p. 88.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCXLI.

A conspicuous exception to this subserviency of the ego is the article in "Le Bien Public," September 14, 1845, entitled "Pourquoi M. de Lamartine est seul." [3] It is a scathing repudiation of the policies advocated and followed by the successive statesmen and parties which had been in power since 1838. Thiers, Guizot, Barrot, and the so-called "Opposition" come in equally for censure or withering contempt. Writing in the third person, Lamartine defends the political isolation in the Chamber of the deputy Lamartine, and explains the inconsistency, the incongruity, of his action had he allied himself completely and irrevocably with one or the other of the parties in power, either as minister or as an ambassador abroad pledged to the execution of the disastrous foreign policies emanating from the Tuileries. The article is a recapitulation of the errors committed against the true interests of France both at home and abroad; of the contradiction of the fundamental principles underlying the democratic doctrines professed; of the weakness displayed by the Opposition, which "yielded up the battlefield after a victorious struggle, and merged its banner with that of its enemies." Far better be a Minister of Public Opinion than a member of the Cabinet of the Crown. Far better the isolation to which he was condemned than the hampering subserviency to policies which must bring discredit on liberal institutions, perhaps endanger the whole social fabric.

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[1] *Portraits contemporains*, vol. I, p. 377.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCLVII.

[3] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. IV, p. 229.

Not that Lamartine belonged to that order of contemplative politicians, Platonists, who, while they profess liberty, decline to risk active participation in the business of government for fear of loss of popularity, or of compromising themselves by a display of their impotence. Defending himself — or rather the Lamartine for whom the anonymous writer has taken up the cudgels — Lamartine asserts that the deputy from Mâcon, far from fearing the risks and responsibilities of power, would be found in the foremost ranks of those battling for the preservation of liberty. "Le pouvoir, au bout de compte, est le but des idées," he frankly admits. "Gouverner, c'est réaliser." But to none is it given to hasten events nor to force their maturity. When the hour for action arrives, Lamartine will be found at his post, cheerfully prepared to assume whatever rôle may be in store for him, regardless of peril, oblivious to all else save his duty as a citizen.[1]

Assuredly none could accuse Lamartine of neglecting the duties imposed by citizenship. The session of 1846 was an unusually busy one. No subject appeared too technical for his comprehension: the variety of topics he discussed with analytical skill and discernment is literally dumbfounding. The flexibility and development of his exceptional talents are nowhere more apparent than during this period (1843-47) of intense political and literary labor.[2] Beginning on January 12 (1846) with a masterly speech on the proposed laws governing the administration of savings banks for workingmen; passing a few days later to a discussion on the Address concerning the Maronites and the policy of the French in Syria, Lamartine took up during this session a bewildering variety of industrial, economic, and military and colonial questions, all of which he treated with a skill denoting profound study and a wonderfully comprehensive grasp of detail, combined with an open-mindedness rare in the annals of parliamentary history. Of course we know that men like De Circourt and Dargaud were at his elbow. Circourt was a student of encyclopædic attainments, and Lamartine made no secret of the immense debt he owed him for the compilation of the statistical and technical scientific knowledge required in the preparation of certain special subjects. To Dargaud also he turned continually for information of a political nature, for this intimate friend and counsellor made it his province to keep in touch with statesmen and politicians, journalists and pamphleteers, with whom Lamartine himself for one reason or another had little personal intercourse.[1]

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. IV, p. 236.

[2] Cf. Émile Deschanel, *Lamartine*, vol. II, p. 154.

But notwithstanding the inestimable value of the aid that he derived from these trusty henchmen, it would be unfair to deny the unparalleled skill demonstrated in hot debate when utilizing the shreds of technical knowledge acquired in weaving the finished fabrics of his eloquent addresses. Take for instance the task he had set himself to obtain a reduction of the tax on salt.[2] Though we have no absolute proof that De Circourt furnished the data, it is probable that Lamartine discussed the subject with him, and this in spite of his assertion, "J'ai beaucoup étudié l'économie politique dans ma vie, bien qu'on ne m'en soupçonne pas."[3] Judging by the specimens M. Doumic has given of the notes Lamartine held in his hand when he mounted the rostrum,[4] the data he consulted on this occasion were probably of the flimsiest; yet by sheer force of eloquence he painted a picture, profusely interlarded with the technical and statistical material he professed to despise, which carried conviction, not only by reason of its moral considerations, but by virtue also of the sound equity of the principles of political economy enunciated. The speech is a *tour de force*, and as such hardly a fair criterion; yet it is but one example of a long series of like productions which leave us dismayed at the versatility of the man whose genius embraced with equal facility problems as widely separated as the poles.[1]

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[1] Cf. Lacretelle, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

[2] *La France parlementaire*, vol. IV, p. 378.

[3] *La France parlementaire*, vol. IV, p. 380, "Sur la Réduction de l'Impôt du Sel." Sainte-Beuve cites a conversation in which Lamartine asks: "Have you ever read political economy?" And without awaiting the answer, goes on: "Did you ever put your nose in that rubbish? Nothing is easier, nothing more amusing." Cf. *Portraits contemporains*, vol. I, p. 381.

[4] Cf. "Lamartine orateur," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, September 15, 1908, p. 342.

On December 24, 1846, Lamartine wrote to M. Dubois, at Cluny: "Le jour où le roi a signé le mariage espagnol il a signé, pour moi, l'abdication éventuelle et presque certaine de sa dynastie." [2]

The Spanish marriages are one of the "crimes" most frequently attributed to Louis-Philippe.[3] The young Queen Isabella and her sister, the Infanta Louisa Fernanda, daughters of Queen Christina, were undoubtedly the victims of political ambitions, not only in France, but in England and Italy. The marriages of these two princesses constituted, at the time, a problem of international importance which threatened the friendly relations of more than one European court. But especially between France and England had the rivalry assumed an aggressive and acrimonious form. Lord Palmerston, who had recently (July, 1846) reassumed control at the Foreign Office, was bitterly opposed to the candidates favoured by the French Court — the Duke of Cadiz and Louis-Philippe's youngest son, the Duc de Montpensier, whom it was desired to see wedded to the Infanta.

It would appear, however, that in the beginning Louis-Philippe, realizing that the affair must cost him the friendship of England, whose candidate, the Duc de Cobourg, he desired to defeat, was unwilling to push the French claims.[4] His hesitation was promptly overridden by

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[1] Cf. Deschanel, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 154. Legouvé relates an anecdote of how Lamartine, while in his bath, prepared a speech on the navigation of the Seine, a purely technical subject of which he had no previous knowledge.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCLXXX.

[3] Cf. W. Müller, *Political History of Modern Times*, vol. IX; also Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VI, p. 203, and Guizot, *Mémoires*, vol. VIII, pp. 100–338.

[4] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VI, pp. 209, 283, together with various English and French authorities cited by him.

Comte Bresson,[1] Ambassador at Madrid, to whom M. Guizot had given positive instructions to urge the choice of the Duke of Cadiz as the little Queen's consort, and Montpensier as the husband of her sister. The plot was an essentially Machiavelian one, for the Duke of Cadiz was mentally and physically unfit for the rôle he was cast to enact, and this being recognized, the object of a French Prince so near the throne was apparent. Lord Palmerston combated the scheme with energy, but public opinion, which had at first supported him, lost interest, while even his colleagues in office became nervous over the possible results of a diplomatic quarrel which threatened to embroil the two countries. In spite of opposition at home and abroad, M. Guizot carried his point, and on October 10, 1846, the double ceremony took place, in Madrid.

But, as Lamartine had foreseen, the consequences of this too patent dynastic ambition were to be far-reaching. "Everything promised peace and security to the throne, when Louis-Philippe's unworthy intrigues to bring about the Spanish marriages suddenly disturbed his cordial relations with England, and shook his credit for good faith in France and throughout Europe. In addition to charges of domestic misgovernment, his enemies were now able to accuse him of sacrificing the honour of France to his own family ambition. The estrangement of England from France was followed by a marked opposition in their foreign policy. In Italy and Sicily, in Spain, Portugal, and Switzerland, England was found in sympathy with the Liberal Party, and favouring constitutional freedom: while France, dreading revolution everywhere, was concerting measures with the absolute Powers of Europe to discourage and repress all popular movements in those States. In foreign and domestic policy, the Citizen-King was now reverting to the traditions of the Bourbons."[1]

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[1] Afterwards committed suicide when Ambassador in Naples, 1847.

Although Lamartine did not take a personal part in the debate on the Spanish marriages, he felt very keenly the iniquity of the sacrifice made of the young Queen. Perhaps, however, he appreciated the fact that when the marriage of the French Prince was concerned, he could not with consistency object to the enactment of the vigorous foreign policy pursued, since he had again and again reproached Louis-Philippe's Government with hesitation and timidity when dealing with questions involving the dignity of France. Lord Palmerston had perhaps acted in too high-handed a fashion in his attempts to browbeat the French Court and Ministry, and agree with him *in petto* although he might, Lamartine was too good a patriot not to resent his action. Moreover, it is probable that at this stage of the growing popular discontent manifested toward the July Monarchy, he felt that it was sufficient to allow Louis-Philippe enough rope in order that he hang himself. The attempt on the King's life by Lecomte (April 16, 1846) had deterred Lamartine from making, as he had proposed doing, a general arraignment of his selfishly personal policy. "On dirait que je l'assassine deux fois," he explained to M. Ronot.[2] But these considerations did not weigh in the "article terrible contre le mariage espagnol" which he published in "Le Bien Public" under the title "Voulons-nous être Nation ou Dynastie?"[3]

Taking the ground that the Duc de Montpensier's marriage was an undisguised attempt to capture the Spanish throne for a prince of the reigning House of France, a mere dynastic intrigue, Lamartine gave full vent to his wrath. Reviewing the situation at home and abroad the writer of this scathing article exclaims: "L'esprit de dynastie nous entraine! la nation abdique, s'engage et se perd, avec sa liberté et sa politique, dans un intérêt mal entendu et dans une politique étroite et fausse de famille!" Exaggerated as his conclusions undoubtedly were, many shared his opinion, considering that the higher interests of the State had been sacrificed to purely dynastic ambitions, calculated, under given circumstances, to draw France into international complications such as the genius of a Louis XIV, a Richelieu, or a Napoleon had found too onerous. On August 1 (1846) Mâcon had reëlected its deputy practically unanimously (three hundred and twenty-one out of three hundred and thirty voters). Conservatives and Republicans joined forces on this occasion to return the popular candidate to Parliament; a glowing tribute to the man and the policies he represented. He had been asked for no programme, and he offered none: or rather, as he told his audience on the day following his brilliant election, his programme could be summed up in three words: "Peace, the People, and Liberty." If they exacted an oath, he would give it them in the following terms: "I swear not to betray the confidence of any good citizen who has given me his suffrage. I swear that on all occasions, under all régimes, before all powers, I will defend the people's cause. I swear that I will serve my country." [1]

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[1] Sir Thomas May, *Democracy in Europe*, vol. II, p. 265; cf. also *Memoirs of Baron Stockmar*, vol. II, pp. 130–207, and Sir Theodore Martin, *Life of the Prince Consort*, vol. I, pp. 341–82.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCLIX.

[3] October 4, 1846.

The widest latitude was left him as to the interpretation of this arcadian programme, for it was evident that he would brook no interference or restraint where his personal convictions were concerned, while it was recognized that extreme measures were totally foreign to his views. Prepare a pacific social revolution by means of the inculcation of ideas he might do, indeed, was doing; but provoke the populace to violence he could be trusted never to aspire to. Besides, despite the growing dissatisfaction with the reactionary policy pursued by the Ministers of the Crown, there was as yet no valid ground for doubts as to the sincerity of the democratic principles professed by the Throne — the Spanish marriages notwithstanding. Few knew, perhaps the author himself was unaware, of the impetus to be shortly given to the outburst of popular sentiment by the publication of the historical work to which Lamartine was devoting long hours of patient study and indefatigable labour. There is, however, a prophetic note in the last letter written in 1846: ". . . I am finishing the 'Girondins' this week. I shall go to Paris on January 15th or 20th. I have nothing to do but to wait. The King is mad; M. Guizot, an inflated vanity; M. Thiers, a weather-cock; the Opposition, a harlot; the Nation, a senile weakling. The conclusion of the comedy will be tragic for many." [1]

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. IV, p. 481.

In March, 1847, the "Girondins," portions of which had appeared at intervals, was published *in extenso*, and immediately took the reading public by storm. Between the 20th of March and June 11, the eight volumes of the "History of the Girondins" followed each other in rapid succession, and edition was heaped upon edition. Four hundred men were kept steadily at work printing, stitching, and binding the popular volumes. Ladies waited all night outside the publishing offices in order to receive a copy.[2] Booksellers who had ordered ten copies now sent for five hundred. Within two months the sales exceeded five hundred thousand francs, and the furor had in no way abated. Lamartine had sold the copyright for two hundred and fifty thousand francs, paid in advance; but in view of the enormous profits derived his publishers added considerably to this sum.[1] The day after the publication Lamartine wrote his friend, M. Ronot, that he had signed a contract to furnish six supplementary volumes on the Revolution. "Cela va au moins à quatre ou cinq cent mille francs, peut-être plus," he writes. "Je payerai mes dettes par le travail." [2] Unfortunately political events and succeeding lassitude and moral discouragement prevented the execution of this literary project, whereby the world has probably lost another *chef-d'œuvre.*

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCLXXX.

[2] *Ibid.*, DCCCLXXXIII.

The causes for the phenomenal popular success of this romantic version of a great historical event are readily comprehensible, since they coincided with the prevailing political and social discontent. The "History of the Girondins" was published at the precise psychological moment when its effect would be most efficient. The July Monarchy, oblivious of its revolutionary and essentially popular origin, was straying farther and farther from the fundamental principle which had brought it into being. On every side there had been disastrous errors; a persistent endeavour on the part of successive ministries to debilitate the constitutional liberties vouchsafed by the Charter of 1830; a reactionary policy which threatened more and more to disfigure, if not totally obliterate, the ideals inherited from 1789. And yet, whatever the faults and failures of Louis-Philippe's system of government, there had undeniably been more of liberty and respect for the law, and more material prosperity, during the seventeen years his reign had lasted, than in any former period in the history of France.[3]

Greatly as the Crown was in fault, especially in the latter years, it would be unfair to put the whole burden on the shoulders of the King. Legitimists, Republicans, the heterogeneous elements of the nefarious Coalition, the often ill-advised and unpatriotic action of the loose and floating Opposition, had all had a hand in the unmaking of the reign which Lafayette had optimistically styled "the best of Republics." If France enjoyed a greater material prosperity than ever before, the riches of the country were concentrated in the hands of a class, that of the *bourgeoisie*, and by their riches they ruled — or were said to rule. The people, — the *prolétaire*, — although theoretically benefited by the constitutional guarantees of 1830, were in reality but little better off politically than had been the previous generation, while a reactionary legislature appeared evermore prone to restrict and rescind the limited franchise flung as a sop to their inconvenient appetite. Before his entry into public life Lamartine had realized, and urged, the necessity for the political and moral uplifting of the proletariat, and a glance over his parliamentary career suffices to demonstrate his incessant striving to this end. We have seen how the selfishness of party and individual ambitions, combined with timidity and greed, thwarting him at every turn, had finally driven him into an attitude of what many considered dynastic opposition.

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[1] Lacretelle, *op. cit.*, p. 96, who states that Lamartine received nearly four hundred thousand francs.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCLXXXV.

[3] Cf. May, *Democracy in Europe*, vol. II, p. 271.

The "History of the Girondins" was his eloquent protest against this meretricious interpretation of the fundamental truths underlying the abuses and excesses of the great Revolution which had proclaimed the rights of man. Despite their errors and their crimes the Girondins represented to him the intellectual and ideal side of the Revolution. Into this work he put all his imagination, all the magic of his style, caring little for strict historical accuracy, but ever seeking the "spirit" of the tremendous human struggle. He transposes dates, gives undue space to episodes which personally please him, suppresses or curtails important facts which lend themselves but ill to the thesis his predilection has adopted, and multiplies portraits which, in his phantasy, replace a true likeness.[1] It is the poet and the artist who holds the pen. To the scholar who toils along the rigid lines laid down by the modern interpretation of the science of history, the work is practically valueless — a mere romance, a poetic rendering of an intensely dramatic episode. But as a picture — a highly coloured picture — as a consummate effort of staging, posturing, and oratorical skill, the work is a masterpiece unsurpassed in literature. The human interest grips the reader as in a vice, carrying him, breathless, through a succession of scenes and episodes each more vivid, each more pathetic or terrifying than the last. But here, as is invariably the case in Lamartine's work, the personal note is never absent. Sainte-Beuve discerns "Jocelyn" in all the revolutionary profiles the author paints.[2] There is perhaps a grain of truth in this manifest exaggeration. Certainly Sainte-Beuve was justified in doubting the aptitude of the author of the "Méditations" as a scientific historian. And yet the great French critic acknowledged Lamartine's prodigious gift of grasping what he calls "l'esprit général des choses." M. Doumic holds much the same opinion. "L'éloquence mène Lamartine à l'histoire, ou plutôt l'histoire n'est pour lui qu'une suite et une autre forme de l'éloquence." And he adds that, despairing of attaining the influence he sought by oratory alone, he thought to win the public over to his views through a series of brilliant object lessons, so to speak.[3]

But there were many less lenient critics. Among these was Villemain, who unhesitatingly dubbed the "Girondins" "paradoxe odieux, réhabilitation sophistique des hommes de sang, tentative immorale pour produire un grand effet au dehors, à défaut d'un succès assez grand dans les Chambres." [1] Madame de Girardin, in her "Lettres parisiennes," neither blames nor praises the work, merely stating the undeniable fact that "the appearance of the 'Girondins' awakened all the furies of party animosity, as it perforce must. This book is a revolution; it is a prediction; it is symptomatic, perhaps a decree! . . . It is certainly not without a reason that God permitted such a man to write such a book." [2]

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[1] Cf. Deschanel, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 162.

[2] Édouard Rod, *Lamartine*, p. 209; cf. also Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du lundi*, vol. IV, p. 197.

[3] Cf. *Lamartine*, p. 197.

Lamartine had gone about conscientiously enough collecting material for his work, and had read enormously in preparation for the task he set himself. With Dargaud he visited several of the survivors of the revolutionary period, gleaning from their recollections fragments of conversations, personal appreciations, and a thousand significant details, which went to make up the vivid pictures he was to draw.[3] His methods were absolutely unscientific, but he was writing with an immediate purpose in view, not a work of erudition, but of political import. "Don't read it," he remarked to M. Molé, when the book was published. "It is written for the people. The people are about to play the principal part: they must be prepared, to them must be given a distaste of executions in order that the coming revolution may be exempt from the excesses of the first. It is my duty to prepare the people, to prepare myself, for I will be the leader of a new social order." [4] He himself admitted the inexactitude of the details. If he recognized, or thought to recognize, a likeness between himself and Mirabeau or Vergniaud, if Robespierre attracted him, it was because he, Lamartine, sympathized with the fundamental moral principles prompting their policies. Robespierre was a religious reformer and a pacifist: fifty years before Lamartine, Robespierre held that to govern a people by the strength of "virtue" was the sum of political ambition. All through the volumes of his history he puts his own political programme, his personal ideals of social progress, into the mouths of his heroes, adapting their actions to fit the peculiar circumstances of the new revolutionary conditions his instinct warns him are pending. The book was written *ad usum populi*, as an example of the virtues displayed in the great social upheaval of 1789, and a warning of the dangers which lay in the excesses of 1792. "Les Girondins," fascinating as the work undoubtedly is, savours rather of the imagination than of strict historical accuracy. Lamartine had borrowed many documents touching on his subject from Joseph Guadet, an historian of a widely different school, and himself a nephew of the well-known conventional of the same name. Writing at a much later date (1861) on the publication of M. Guadet's volume, Lamartine pays a graceful tribute to the author. "I was strongly moved by the perusal of this fine document he has just given to sober history, with so remarkable a talent. I forgot my own effort in order to applaud, in mind and heart, this family historian's work, for his soul, like his pen, appears tinged with the stoicism of a Guadet and a Vergniaud." [1]

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[1] Cf. G. Vauthier, *Villemain*, p. 144.

[2] Cf. *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 237.

[3] Cf. Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

[4] *Souvenirs du Comte d'Estourmel*, cited by M. des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

At a much later date Lamartine himself wrote a criticism of his "Histoire des Girondins." Too late, he realized the harm done by the want of discrimination in his pages. "I was indignant with myself," he confesses, "on re-reading this morning the last lyrical page of the

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[1] J. Guadet, *Les Girondins*, cited in "Notice biographique" of the edition of 1889, p. xii. No trace of the original has been found in Lamartine's published works.

'Girondins,' and I conjure my readers to destroy it, as I destroy it before posterity and before God." [1]

By reason of his eulogy of the Revolution of 1789, Lamartine has been held personally responsible by many critics for the overthrow of the constitutional and theoretically liberal Government of July. That he himself accepted qualified blame would appear from his disavowal of certain of the incriminating pages. But it would be a gross exaggeration to pretend that any one man, however brilliant his gifts, could influence, to the extent of a social and political revolution, a nation of forty-odd millions.

That the work fired the imagination of the reading public and augmented the latent dissatisfaction of the intellectual class with the existing political conditions, is certain. But such purely literary effort could hardly be expected to influence the masses, who had neither the time nor the mental power to read and grasp the philosophy contained in eight large volumes of lyrical prose.[2] Of course, the Opposition and revolutionary newspapers seized upon the book, adapting its philosophy to the social requirements of their readers. But even this vulgarization of Lamartine's apotheosis of the leaders of the great Revolution must have been impotent to arouse popular sentiment had not a deep-seated economic unrest permeated the country at large. The bourgeoisie, which included the great financial and industrial elements, was unmercifully bleeding the nation — the France of the proletariat — for its own selfish ends, taking no heed of the social discontent. Material prosperity, it was averred, was greater than ever before. This was undoubtedly true; yet the nation's wealth was passing more and more into the coffers of the privileged class. France was rich to the profit of the few at the expense of the many. In all fairness it must be admitted that the economic forces previously paramount were undergoing transformations hitherto unknown. The introduction of steam and its attendant labour-saving machinery, the construction of railways, and the increasing facilities of transportation of produce from great distances, were revolutionizing the factors which formed the basis of national and individual prosperity. Immense capital was necessary for the accomplishment of the new economic structure, and to procure such capital untried fiscal and financial combinations were inevitable. Material interests outweighed the social in the scramble for gold. Unavoidably, perhaps, prudent political economists overlooked or discarded the claims of the humble toilers in their dreams of the coming era of universal prosperity. They forgot the immense step forward in education taken since the advent of the Liberal Government of Louis-Philippe. They ignored the insidious spread of popular indifference towards religion, and the consequent political materialism of the masses.

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[1] Cf. *Critique de l'Histoire des Girondins*, p. 258.

[2] Writing to Mademoiselle Rachel, the famous actress, Lamartine says that he leaves, as his visiting card, "huit énormes volumes"; adding: "C'est la tragédie moderne qui se présente humblement en mauvaise prose à la tragédie antique." *Correspondance*, DCCCLXXXVIII.

These dangers had been foreseen by Lamartine. "Je suis socialiste aussi, et je l'ai prouvé dans mon premier balbutiement pratique 'La Politique rationnelle,'"[1] he remarked to Lacretelle a year or two after 1848. A socialist in the present sense of the term he never was; but from the first to the last of his public speeches he never ceased urging the importance, the vital importance, to the State of the consideration of the social equity of every political and economic measure presented to Parliament. Little by little it was borne in upon him that, far from enlarging the circle of popular liberties and social progress, the Government of Louis-Philippe was seeking to restrict the franchises guaranteed by the Constitution of 1830. Since 1843 he had broken with the retrograde conservative elements, with which, it is true, he had only been spasmodically allied, and used his influence to combat, not the Throne, but what he called "la politique du règne." Between that date and 1847 can be noted an ever-widening breach between his principles and those followed by the advisers of the Crown. Yet Lamartine was of an essentially anti-revolutionary temperament, with all his eagerness for reform. If carried away by lyrical enthusiasm he glossed over certain actions, certain crimes against which his humanity rebelled; if he glorified Robespierre and Danton, and idealized both Girondins and Montagnards, it was because he sought the sacred principles behind the men and their actions, because he believed the principles involved in the French Revolution inseparable from those which should guide France.[1] The materialism, religious, political, and economical, which invaded all realms of social activity during the last decade of the reign of Louis-Philippe, was an excuse, if an excuse were needed, for an effort to inculcate afresh the humanitarian doctrines which had set fire to the great social upheaval of 1789, and had persistently underlain the horrible excesses which unbridled licence had practised in the sacred name of Liberty. A socialist of the red flag variety he had never been; but he could and did sympathize with the social party who in 1832 stated in their programme that they had less in view a political change than *une refonte sociale.* But he could not go with them when they asserted that although the extension of public rights, of electoral reform, and universal suffrage, might be excellent things in themselves, they could be accepted as a means only, not as an end.[1]

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[1] Lacretelle, *Lamartine et ses amis*, p. 159.

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[1] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 49, who cites an interesting conversation between Lamartine and M. de Carné shortly after the publication of his book.

Again and again Lamartine averred that the form of government which might be adopted was immaterial, and as the years passed he was more and more inclined to accept the Republic as the solution of both the political and the social problems. But he was not prepared to accept a "red republic" founded on spoliation and anarchy: of this he gave ample proof when confronted by the howling mob before the Hôtel de Ville in February, 1848. To him the "complete establishment of the reign of equality" meant not the communistic division of property, but a just and equitable participation by all classes in the benefits and burdens of government by means of universal suffrage, radical electoral reforms, and unrestricted extension of civic rights. Warm sympathy with, and unqualified admiration for, each and all of these fundamental principles of individual and collective liberty can be discerned on every page of the "Histoire des Girondins." Those who have followed step by step Lamartine's political career will with difficulty admit that he deliberately intended to explode the mine of popular discontent by the publication of the book.

There is, of course, damning evidence to the contrary; but it is circumstantial evidence. In the first place, the belief was general that Lamartine, dissatisfied with the influence he wielded in the Chamber and with the public at large, was eager to strike some telling blow which should signalize him prominently before the country. A story is told that Victor Cousin was approached by a well-known editor who desired an article on Jesus Christ written from a broad philosophical point of view. Cousin refused the offer, but suggested Lamartine, who, he said, "was burning to compromise himself."[1] It is held by many that the "Girondins" was written with this object. "If you held a revolution in your hand, would you open it?" asked Lamartine of M. Louis de Ronchaud, one morning as they walked in the park at Monceau.[2] And Ronchaud adds: "Lamartine écrivit alors 'Les Girondins,' et, tout en écrivant, il se disait à part lui que ces pages de feu, qui chaque matin s'allumaient sous sa plume, pourraient bien, en s'envolant de son cabinet, produire un incendie qui dévorerait le trône de Juillet." And the biographer continues that Lamartine was fully aware of the peril of the situation, but was willing to run the risk rather than condemn to sterility the budding germs of democratic liberties he had done so much to foster and develop. Consequently "he opened the hand whence took flight, volume after volume, this terrible book." The scruples he felt were lost, writes another critic, in the frenzy of the artist, combined with irritation over the opposition he had encountered: they melted before the recklessness of the gambler who blindly seeks to recoup his uncertain fortunes.[3] Lamartine himself substantiates the comparison when he writes M. Ronot: "I have staked my fortune, my literary fame, and my political future on a card to-night" (the eve of the publication of the "Girondins," March 20, 1847).[4] And he adds significantly: "It is said everywhere that the fierce flame of great revolutions is being kindled, and that it will better the people in the face of revolutions to come. May God will it!"

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[1] Cf. Seignobos, *Histoire politique de l'Europe contemporaine*, p. 129.

Encouraged by the success of his book, and the praise to which it gave rise, he remarked in conversation with M. de Carné a few months later: "If I am applauded, it is because I have fulfilled a task of tardy justice. . . ." [1] And again, to M. Ronot: "C'est surtout le peuple qui m'aime et qui m'achète." [2] To which might be added his eloquent silence when it was pointed out to him, by an enthusiastic admirer of the book, that the people were ready to acclaim him President of the Republic.[3]

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[1] Cf. Charles Alexandre, *Souvenirs de Lamartine*, p. 5.

[2] *La Politique de Lamartine*, vol. I, p. lix.

[3] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 47.

[4] *Correspondance*, DCCCLXXXIV.

Yes. Lamartine had grasped the magnitude of the crisis his opinions had helped to precipitate. And yet there would seem adequate reason for the belief that at the outset of his task he held no brief for the Revolution after 1793. His horror of violence and bloodshed was instinctive. If he seemed to palliate the unpardonable excesses of the leaders of the Reign of Terror, it was the poet, not the philosopher, who was accountable, and it was the vanity of the successful author, not the pride of the statesman, which was flattered by the immense popularity he achieved. It is, therefore, Lamartine the poet and not Lamartine the statesman we must seek in "Les Girondins." The glorification of 1789, if not precisely that of 1793, was in the air. With the Restoration, Thiers and Mignet had begun the rehabilitation of the Revolution, and their respective histories had met with encouraging approval. Now both Michelet and Louis Blanc were engaged on the same task.[4] The artist and the lyric poet in Lamartine, the romancer and the orator, the idealizer and social reformer, all the aggregations which went to make his concrete individuality, were deeply stirred by the story he had to tell. Every wind that passed drew sounds from his Æolian harp, the strings of which resounded, untouched by his fingers, with the blast of the tempest. "Comme toujours, il ne joua pas de son instrument: il le laissa jouer."

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[1] Cf. *Correspondance* of December 10, 1873.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCLXXXIV.

[3] De Mazade, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, October 15, 1870.

[4] Cf. Édouard Rod, *Lamartine*, p. 210; cf. also Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, pp. 44-45.

CHAPTER XXXIX

A CAMPAIGN OF BANQUETS

THE unparalleled success of the "Histoire des Girondins," in the pages of which was to be found staunch appreciation of many of the social problems then agitating the public conscience, had fired the citizens of Mâcon to do honour to their illustrious deputy. Public political gatherings being banned, it was decided that the manifestation should take the form of a banquet. The Government, in no wise blind to the political significance of the demonstration, and fully aware of the concealed hostility to the régime, could not well forbid this form of popular homage to a successful author. Although the Prefect declined the invitation to preside, he dared not go to the length of open interference. "The Republicans in our midst wanted to take a muster of their forces," confessed Lacretelle. "The word itself could not be spoken, but the idea was ill-concealed beneath the reticence observed." [1] Of course this was an open secret, but the authorities were practically helpless, as long as the literary travesty was maintained.

On the appointed day, Sunday, July 18, 1847, vast crowds flocked to the site selected for the Gargantuan feast, where five hundred tables were spread for three thousand guests. Huge stands surrounded the banqueting tent, on which were seated over three thousand spectators. The whole enclosure covered more than two acres. Forty towns in the neighbouring departments were represented; journalists from Paris, public men from Switzerland, and bands of English tourists mingled with the enormous crowds of peasants who, in their quaint costumes, gathered from considerable distances to witness this unique sight.[1] The banquet passed off in admirable order. The heat was, however, terribly oppressive, and as Lamartine rose, after being introduced by the Mayor of Mâcon, M. Rolland, a furious thunderstorm, heralded by a perfect cyclone, burst over the assembled multitude. In a trice the tent was torn asunder, and six thousand human beings were exposed to the fury of the elements. Yet such was the fascination of the moment that there was no panic: not a cry was heard, each guest remained quietly seated, philosophically accepting the drenching he received, in order not to lose a syllable of the magnificent harangue Lamartine proceeded to deliver amid the crashing of the thunder and the flapping of the rent canvas. In his opening phrase, with felicitous *à propos*, he reminded his hearers that they were the worthy descendants of those ancient Gauls who had boasted that were the vault of the heavens to crumble they would uphold it with their shields. "So you to-day brave the elements," he cried, "in order to hear words of righteousness and liberty." The address is for the greater part a résumé of his speeches in Parliament during the past ten years, but what M. Louis Barthou calls the speaker's "fluide oratoire" lent additional charm to the impassioned phrases. And this in spite of the warring of the elements which caused him to express the fear, in writing to his wife, lest he had been "cold, worried, and curt."[2] Certainly his audience did not think so, if we may judge by the enthusiastic applause which followed each period. The vivid pictures he paints of the growth of public hostility against the reactionary tendencies of the Crown were calculated to impress a far less cordially disposed gathering. "I said one day," he cried, " 'La France s'ennuie!' I add to-day, 'La France s'attriste.'" Innocuous as the phrase sounded, it contained a scathing indictment against the mercenary scandals in ministerial and parliamentary circles, scandals which were then causing grave concern. He bitterly reproached the Government with fostering the spirit of materialism which is choking the pure patriotism of the Nation. What is to be the issue? Must France face another revolution — a flood of irritated demagogy which will submerge the very foundations of society? The orator gives no direct answer to his question; yet he makes his meaning clear in the toast he proposes. "Gentlemen! Here is to the regular, progressive, and continuous triumph of Human Reason! To the victory of Human Reason in the development of ideas, in the institutions, and in the laws, in the recognition of universal rights, the freedom of worship, in education and literature, and in both the reality and the form of Government." [1]

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[1] *Lamartine et ses amis*, p. 97.

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[1] The details are taken from Lacretelle, an eye-witness, and from introductory lines to Lamartine's speech, given *in extenso* in *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 27.

[2] Cf. *Lamartine orateur*, p. 220.

This utterance has been styled an apotheosis of Republicanism. It was certainly considered as such by the thousands who applauded his words to the echo, and escorted the speaker, shouting the "Marseillaise."[2]

And yet Lamartine was evidently still unprepared for a great political upheaval, if we may credit the sincerity of his letter to a colleague in the French Academy, M. Chamborre. "I am far from desiring a revolution," he wrote shortly after the delivery of the speech recorded above. "In France a revolution has only one lever — war. Do me the justice to remember that officially and privately I have always striven to prevent it. Had I wished a revolution in 1838 or in 1840, I would have joined the Coalition and applied the spark which would have set it ablaze. Who then sang the 'Marseillaise' on the balcony at Neuilly? It was the King himself. Who faced unpopularity to snatch a declaration of war from the weak and trembling hands of M. Thiers? It was I. Remember this. I admit with you that material progress is more secure in France with Conservatives than with the Whigs; but there is an immense moral progress which it is necessary, obligatory to obtain within the next fifty years, otherwise humanity will recede. The Throne and the Conservatives of to-day are incapable of achieving this. For this reason I believe a more energetic impulse in the Government of France is desirable, and I resolutely face not revolutions, but reforms of the vital issues." And the writer goes on to explain that it is in anticipation of the "prophetic hour" he foresees, and to hasten its advent, that he considers it his duty to fan with his weak breath the sacred fire of 1789, of which the last lingering embers will die unless a few men such as he rekindle them. "Do not fear any excess of energy in France at present. Her danger lies not there. Fear rather her too heavy slumber, and do not be anxious concerning the few men, right-minded men, who whisper to her at times: *sursum corda!*"[1]

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[1] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 46.

[2] In his letter to Dargaud of July 20, 1847, Lamartine writes: ". . . pas une 'Marseillaise' dans les rues." (*Correspondance*, DCCCXCV.) Lacretelle, on the contrary, insists that the "Marseillaise" was sung during the ceremonies. (*Op. cit.*, p. 106.)

In the "Declaration of Principles" published in "Le Bien Public," Lamartine is much more explicit. "In a word we are Democrats," he proudly asserts; "Democrats like Nature and like the Gospels. Truth is for us Democracy organized as civic society and political government. All the rest is fiction, sophism, lies, tyranny." And he goes on to enumerate the *desiderata* of the social body such as he would have it constituted. In the ideal scheme of things the people are sovereign; universal suffrage solves the electoral problem; ministerial corruption is checked by the salaried representatives who are thus enabled to maintain their independence of the Government; the King inviolable, but the princes simple citizens; real liberty of worship is attained by the separation of Church and State; the freedom of the press assured by the revocation of the September Laws; to which are added a long list of considerations, such as the abolition of slavery; free public instruction; progressive free trade; and a host of other economic and philanthropic reforms or innovations, savouring more or less of the socialism dictated by the principles of Christianity.[1] That such a programme should appeal to the popular mind was to be expected, and it followed that the politician who enunciated principles so in harmony with the aspirations of the masses should become their idol. Many of Lamartine's articles of faith are now firmly incorporated in the political dogma of every civilized State: others must ever prove too idealistic for human society. "Vous venez de proclamer la République," insisted the friends who crowded about him after his triumphal popular ovation at Mâcon. "Perhaps," he replied, "but I am not likely to see many years of the hegira." And pointing to the scudding clouds between which the stars shone, he sighed: "La République descend de là-haut. Ne la laissez jamais se corrompre en bas." [2]

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCXCVIII.

M. Thureau-Dangin, referring to the banquet at Mâcon, sneers: "It was with an accompaniment of thunderclap and the roar of the wind, in the sheen of lightning, that Lamartine spoke. Such a setting befitted his imagination: he pictured himself the Moses of the Democratic Revelation, in the midst of the bolts of a new Sinai."[3] To which M. Doudan ironically adds that the storm, having found its master, retired in confusion.

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[1] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 77.

[2] Lacretelle, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

[3] *Op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 87.

The banquet at Mâcon, although not strictly speaking the first of its kind, was to prove the signal for the opening of a series of similar demonstrations which instituted the campaign for reform throughout France.[1] Like many of the political innovations introduced during the reign of Louis-Philippe, the present form of agitation was borrowed from England. During the year 1846 Richard Cobden made a visit to France. The opposition seized on the opportunity to familiarize their countrymen with the methods employed across the Channel, and Mr. Cobden, in his interviews with French reformers, dwelt upon the advantages of public meetings and banquets in interesting the people in the question of reform. It was speedily realized that M. Guizot's majority in the Chamber forbade effectual parliamentary action. "We are going to open the windows," observed an adversary of the Cabinet, using practically the same phrase as had Lamartine some years previously.[2] It would appear that Cobden himself, when he appreciated the meagreness of the result aimed at in the agitation, doubted the wisdom of the proceeding, as the electoral reform demanded did not exceed two hundred thousand voters added to the list, comprising "les capacités," the professions, and a certain small increase from a slightly reduced tax-paying franchise. "Upon my expressing my amazement that they should go for such a small measure (which, to be sure, appeared insignificant to me, just fresh from the total repeal of the Corn Laws), they answered that it would satisfy them for the present; it would recognize the principle of progress; and they frankly confessed that the bulk of the people were not fit for the suffrage, and that there was no security for constitutional government excepting in a restricted electoral class." [1]

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[1] The first so-called "banquet réformiste" was given in Paris at the Château Rouge, on July 9, 1847. Twelve hundred reformers sat at table.

[2] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 97.

Mr. Cobden's opinion of M. Guizot is worth quoting here: "When I was in Paris in 1846, I saw M. Guizot, and thought I had weighed him accurately as a politician. I pronounced him an intellectual pedant and a moral prude, with no more knowledge of men and things than is possessed by professors who live among their pupils, and he seemed to me to have become completely absorbed in the hard and unscrupulous will of Louis-Philippe." [2] Later, continues Mr. Cobden, when the question had reached an acute stage, "Guizot mounted the rostrum, and flourished his rod, and in true pedagogical style told them they were naughty boys — that they wanted to have banquets, which were very wicked things, and that he would not allow such things. . . ." And speaking retrospectively he adds: "There is not the slightest possible doubt (no Englishman but myself has so good a ground for offering an opinion, for no other was in the secrets of the French reformers) that if Louis-Philippe had allowed an addition of two hundred thousand voters to the two hundred and fifty thousand already on the electoral list, he would have renewed the lease of the Orleanist throne for twenty years, and in all probability have secured for the French people the permanent advantages of a constitutional government."

Although the Central Committee for Electoral Reform was Republican in its essence, representatives of the various benches in the Chambers had not hesitated to give their adhesion to the movement. Thus "the windows were opened" not by one particular party, but by all those who had at heart the extension of the constitutional liberties of France.[1] Between July and the end of the year over seventy of these banquets had been held in the principal towns throughout the length and breadth of the land. Combined with efforts to secure electoral reforms were protestations against the corruption within the Chamber and in all departments of the administration. On August 18 the very foundations of the social fabric were shaken by the news of the brutal murder of the Duchess of Choiseul-Praslin by her husband. Although at first sight no connection could be discerned between this crime and the political agitation in progress, the issue of the tragedy was seized upon to demonstrate the inefficiency of the principles of equality before the law. The opposition press made enormous capital out of the miserable affair, insisting that class privileges had been exercised, and common justice defeated and defrauded of an example by the intercession of the Upper House, which had declared itself alone competent to try the culprit.[2] This incident did more, perhaps, to inflame public opinion than the trial of MM. Teste and Cubières and other well-known political leaders involved in the financial scandals for which the Ministry was held responsible. Confidence in the Government was undermined. A few hours after the news of the terrible crime became known, M. Molé, the former Minister, wrote to M. de Barante: "Notre civilisation est bien malade, et rien ne m'étonnerait moins qu'un bon cataclysme qui mettrait fin à tout cela."[3] After the "cataclysme" had taken place Sainte-Beuve, in March, 1848, exclaimed: "The revolution now in course is social rather than political; M. de Praslin's action contributed towards it perhaps as much as M. Guizot." To which he added that Lamartine characterized it vigorously when he warned his hearers (at the Mâcon banquet) concerning the "revolution of public conscience, and that of disgust."[1] M. Thureau-Dangin, the great apologist of the July Monarchy, himself admits as much when he writes: "Under the existing circumstances, the Duc de Praslin's crime was one of the most fatal blows not only against the monarchy, but against society." [2]

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[1] John Morley, *Life of Richard Cobden*, vol. 1, p. 417.

[2] Morley, *op. cit.*, p. 416.

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[1] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 81, *et seq.*

[2] Before the termination of his trial, the Duc de Praslin died on August 24 of the effects of poison. Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 93.

[3] Cited by Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 97.

From the steps of the throne to the workshop, the feeling of insecurity and of impending disaster was profound. The Duchess of Orleans voiced the general sentiment when she wrote of the universal disgust caused by the lamentable weakness of those in power and the growing indifference of the lower classes. "Le mal est profond, parce qu'il atteint les populations dans leur moralité." [3] Only the old King and Guizot appeared either blind or resolutely determined not to recognize the extreme peril which faced them. Of course the campaign of the banquets gained fresh impetus by reason of the scandal of the Praslin affair. M. Odilon Barrot, although nominally monarchical in his sympathies, was, strange as it must appear, an upholder of the policy which prompted the banquets, and himself attended more than twenty, imparting an ever-growing revolutionary character to the functions.[4] Lamartine, on the contrary, although frequently invited to preside, refused to associate himself with this form of agitation. "It was certainly neither timidity nor conservative scruples which prevented him," maliciously writes Thureau-Dangin;

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[1] *Portraits contemporains*, vol. I, p. 377; cf. also Girardin, *Lettres parisiennes*, vol. IV, p. 259, and Bourgin, *Souvenirs d'une mission à Berlin*, vol. I, p. xxxv.

[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 97.

[3] Arnaud, *Madame la Duchesse d'Orléans*, p. 114.

[4] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 102. Maxime du Camp in his *Souvenirs* (p. 42) ridicules Barrot's sententious utterances.

"it was disinclination to play second fiddle." M. Thiers likewise refrained from any direct participation, which prompted Odilon Barrot's caustic remark that "if Thiers did not take his seat as one of the guests, it was because he was the chief cook." [1]

It was in truth a strange medley of political parties which congregated at these gatherings. Odilon Barrot, although a fervent "reformist," was far from realizing the inevitable consequences of his feverish agitation. But the constant presence of certain guests at length opened his eyes to the fact that for some months he had, as the "Revue des Deux Mondes" expressed it, been "dining with the Republic." Nothing daunted, however, he fought bravely against ever-increasing odds to preserve the purely reform characteristics of the agitation he had so rashly inaugurated.

After the splendid triumph of the banquet at Mâcon, Lamartine, partly on account of his health, partly, perhaps, because he did not care to associate his name too closely or prominently with a movement the issue of which was not doubtful to him, decided to travel for a few weeks. The financial success of his "Girondins" had, temporarily at least, replenished his coffers, and having money in hand Lamartine was not the man to hesitate at spending it. Marseilles had been selected as offering certain advantages for sea-bathing. Naples, Ischia, and Palermo were also considered, but once comfortably installed in the South of France, it was decided to remain there. Perhaps Lamartine considered it wise, in view of the precarious political situation, to be within easy reach of Mâcon or Paris. The reception offered him at Marseilles was immensely flattering, and made him appreciate keenly, if indeed such assurance was necessary, that it was expected he would play a conspicuous part when the crisis came. Between five and six thousand workmen, hearing of his arrival, had gathered beneath his windows and offered him silent homage. "We are about to begin a great battle, the battle of God. . . . I devote myself to God and to men, in order to lead them to God. Some one must burn his hand; I will, if necessary, be that Mucius Scævola of Human Reason."[1] To the same correspondent he writes that although he had come South for rest and quiet, he had been forced to make seven speeches within a week, the popular success of which had been "fabulous."

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[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 106.

From Marseilles also is dated that curious letter to a tailor at Mâcon, describing his interpretation of communism. In this document, as well as in another written a few weeks later to M. Cabet, one of the chief advocates of the doctrine, Lamartine very clearly defines his objections to the creed. "No, I am not a communist," he informed the tailor; "because I have the well-considered conviction that communism would destroy at once property, family, labour, capital, and wages, even the State and the Nation."[2] In his reply to M. Cabet he added: "My opinion of communism is summed up in a sentence; here it is: If God gave me a band of savages to civilize and to which to impart morality, the first institution I should insist upon would be property." And he goes on to define the three fundamental bases of social order, the State, the Family, and Property. "Communism," he exclaims, "means the cessation of labour and the consequent extinction of Humanity."[3]

On his return to Mâcon, in the middle of September, Lamartine found the campaign of the banquets more active than ever. But in spite of urgent appeals from the four corners of France he refused to allow himself to be dragged into the movement. "Le rôle de courrier national ne me convient pas," he wrote his old school-fellow, Guichard de Bienassis,[1] but he foresaw the possible necessity of taking part in those organized nearer home, in his own Department, at Châlon and Autun. This letter also contains the flattering information that the publishers of "Les Girondins" were offering him double the amount he had received for this book, if he would write another on the same epoch. "But I have neither strength, time, nor health at this moment," he avers; "my rheumatism exhausts me." It is more probable, however, that he realized he had exhausted the historical vein, and that the new work he had in hand, well-nigh finished, in fact, would amply compensate the public for the loss of a "revolutionary episode." It was "Les Confidences" to which he referred, and he was right in supposing that public curiosity would be even greater concerning the private life of the famous author than as to his interpretation of an historical epoch.[2]

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCC. An allusion to the heroic conduct of the Roman warrior who, having failed in his attempt to slay Porsena, held his right hand in the fire until it was consumed.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCCIII.

[3] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 106.

On October 24, 1847, Lamartine issued (in "Le Bien Public") the first of three important articles which followed each other at intervals of three or four days. "La Situation de la France à l'Extérieur"[3] is in substance merely a rehash of the speeches he had made during the enactment of the foreign policies he now attacked with renewed bitterness. But it is not only a criticism or an arraignment of the diplomatic blunders committed in the name of France, but a scathing indictment of the Minister in power, of the "pedagogue Guizot," as Mr. Cobden styled him. Thiers comes in for his share of blame, but it is Guizot and the King who receive the brunt of his anger. Given the existing crisis, the attack assumed an importance it could not have possessed when delivered from the rostrum in the heat of parliamentary debate. Lamartine was also enabled in print to dwell at greater length on the humiliating international position created for France by the selfish family interests involved in the Spanish marriages, on the sacrifice of England's friendship and political support. In detail he examined and analyzed with consummate skill the existing situation in Italy and Switzerland. Pius IX had just startled the world with his professions of liberalism, and his open antagonism to Austrian supremacy in the Peninsula. Throughout Italy the Pope was hailed as the champion of national independence, the hero of the constitutional movement at that period welcomed as the panacea for all political ills. Lamartine, however, had little faith in the liberalism of a theocratic sovereign, and warned the world not to accept too literally the clerical tocsin-bell of independence. But he was wrong when he prophesied that the man who could unite all Italy under his banner must be a foreigner; the star of Victor-Emmanuel and of Cavour had not yet risen above the dark horizon of tyranny-ridden Italy. Turning to the burning question of intervention in Switzerland, where the Jesuits had lighted the torches of internecine war, Lamartine favoured a French policy which should guarantee to their neighbours every facility for revising their constitution on lines calculated to fortify national independence and draw closer the bonds of confederation between the cantons. Here again the writer discerned the baneful influences of the Spanish marriages, which had alienated France from her Liberal friends in England, and driven Louis-Philippe into the arms of the absolutist Powers.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCCVII.

[2] The composition of *Les Confidences* had been begun during the visit to Ischia, in 1844. Charles Alexandre, in his *Souvenirs* (p. 164), states that Eugène Pelletan, to whom Lamartine read some of the passages while still at Ischia, on his return to Paris spoke in glowing terms of the manuscript to Madame de Girardin, who from that moment urged the poet to complete his story. *Les Confidences* began to appear in *La Presse*, M. de Girardin's newspaper, in December, 1848. The author was paid forty thousand francs for his rights, if we may credit Alexandre. Lamartine would have preferred that the autobiographical work he had terminated at this period, entitled *Raphaël*, should precede the publication of *Les Confidences*, but M. de Girardin did not agree with him. Cf. *Correspondance*, DCCCCXI. It had been his intention to publish *Raphaël* in the following March (cf. *Correspondance*, DCCCCXIV), but the Revolution of February prevented.

[3] *La France parlementaire*, vol. V, p. 91.

Meanwhile the banquets were being multiplied throughout the length and breadth of France, and this novel form of protest and popular manifestation was causing the Government increasing embarrassment. It would appear that, despite repeated refusals, the organizers were determined to include Lamartine among the guests. To Émile de Girardin he wrote on December 5: "Les banquets m'obsèdent. J'en ai juste quarante sur ma table ce matin." The universal homage thus paid to his political influence was certainly flattering, and Lamartine was fully alive to its significance. In the same letter he draws attention to the fact that his position is not as isolated as his foes pretend, and that should he utter the word, thousands would flock to his standard.[1] For reasons of his own, however, Lamartine preferred not to pronounce the sentence which would rally round him the followers he discerned in every province of France. He was content to let events shape their own course; more and more convinced that the hour was at hand when he would be called upon by popular acclamation to fill the rôle of supreme arbiter of the Nation's destiny.

At Lille (November 7, 1847) Ledru-Rollin made a great speech which he dedicated to the labouring classes, and in which he referred to Lamartine as the sincere friend and admirer of "pure democracy." Far from being embarrassed by this public acknowledgment of his sympathies, the author of the "Girondins" replied in "Le Bien Public" of the 14th, that the communism of

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCCXI.

Ledru-Rollin was about the same as his own; "that is to say, an intelligent love of the people, a live pity for the sufferings of the masses, an earnest realization of the injustice of which they are the victims owing to a legislature in which they possess neither representation nor deliberative action. . . ." "Does not this page explain the condescendence of Lamartine's subsequent opinions?" queries M. Victor Pierre in his "Histoire de la République de 1848,"[1] and we must perforce agree that it is the entering wedge, at least, of his public action. But, nevertheless, Lamartine decided not to attend even the local banquets, and to hold himself aloof as much as possible from direct participation in the movement. At the same time he published a scathing article in "Le Bien Public," entitled "Le Banquet de Châlon," in which he handled somewhat roughly Thiers and Barrot.[2] He had as little inclination to be identified with the *extremists* as with the dynastic elements, believing the *isolation* in which he stood must, when the storm burst, prove productive of greater authority. Lacretelle would seem to attribute Lamartine's refusal to attend the banquet at Châlon to the fear of being eclipsed or rivalled by the brilliant orators who were to take part in it, and to Lamartine himself he expressed the fear that his non-participation might be construed as a disavowal of the cause. Frankly admitting this interpretation, Lamartine explained that much as he admired Ledru-Rollin, one of the pillars of democracy, he could not ally himself openly with the Radicals, between whom and the Republicans there existed, according to his way of thinking, "a fatal distinction."[3] It is comprehensible that Lamartine at this stage of the crisis should have hesitated to meet in public men professing such ultra-advanced theories as

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[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 32.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCCXIII.

[3] Cf. Lacretelle, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

Ledru-Rollin and Flocon, the latter especially, who styled himself openly a Red Republican.[1] But it is astounding to note that Lamartine failed to discern any vital difference between the political theories of these politicians and those he himself held concerning the interpretation and ultimate aims of democracy. Nevertheless, whatever his private conclusions may have been, it behooved him to avoid compromising himself with any special designation at this juncture, at the risk of forfeiting in the popular mind the unique political position he held — that of an absolutely disinterested friend of the people and an unbiassed advocate of social reform in the broadest sense of the term.

Lamartine has been accused of entertaining an overweening ambition to play the saviour of society. Yet there was nothing but what was strictly legitimate in his ambition. He never condescended to intrigue for the furtherance of the aims he had in view: nor did he exercise even the common ruses of diplomacy to conceal or push his object. On every occasion he spoke out fearlessly what was uppermost in his mind, braving unpopularity with honest scorn, and sacrificing personal advantages for a principle. Nor was there even method in his ambition. "L'ambition de Lamartine était vaste et flottante comme toutes les grandes ambitions," wrote Sainte-Beuve.[2] And Sainte-Beuve was not a lenient critic.

Parliament opened on December 28, 1847, and Lamartine was early at his post, for he knew the session would prove a momentous one. Yet on the surface no signs of extraordinary agitation were visible. In both Houses the Government still controlled, or nominally controlled, a considerable majority. The opposition, it is true, displayed symptoms of unusual excitement; but this was comprehensible after six months of increasing activity during the campaign of the banquets. Nevertheless, the recent political and financial scandals, followed by a perfect epidemic of suicides in administrative and diplomatic circles, caused M. Guizot's Cabinet grave concern. It was realized that the tension had reached an extremely dangerous point, and that some alleviation must be found if a catastrophe was to be avoided. Even the Government majority, although numerically considerable, appeared morally undermined; if they still adhered to the ministerial policy, they did so almost reluctantly, displaying docility rather than confidence.[1] The elections of the previous year, it was agreed by the optimists, had returned this majority. This was undoubtedly true, but the optimists forgot, or purposely overlooked, the fact that the two hundred thousand voters who had returned the elements of this majority constituted but a fraction of the thirty-five millions who peopled France. The recent agitation had been set on foot to double the electorate, or what was termed "le pays légal"; but, as has been seen, the movement soon showed unmistakable signs of hostility towards the whole political system in power. The political revolution, if revolution there was to be, was designed merely as the means for the social revolution which was to follow. Lamartine had intuitively grasped this fact; hence his disinclination to identify himself prominently with the men who, throwing aside the pretext of reform, were now openly seeking the destruction of the system which they had established in 1830.

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[1] Cf. *Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 59.

[2] *Portraits contemporains*, vol. I, p. 377.

M. Guizot had now been in power eight years, practically exercising uncontested control. He had systematically set his face against progressive reforms of any kind, and although strictly constitutional in spirit, he was not unreasonably accused of distinctly reactionary practices. Abroad his motto was "Peace at any price," even at the cost of humiliation to the national pride, and in this policy he was credited with following explicitly the instructions of the King. Hence, both Louis-Philippe and his Minister shared the growing unpopularity of the régime. On all sides the King was urged to dispense with the services of M. Guizot, who, it was alleged, constituted the stumbling-block to the renewal of his own popularity. But the aged sovereign realized that M. Molé was the only alternative, and that through the introduction of the reforms M. Molé would insist upon, M. Thiers must inevitably and rapidly succeed him. "Thiers, c'est la guerre; et je ne veux pas voir anéantir ma politique de paix," protested the King. And he added petulantly: "D'ailleurs, si on me pousse, j'abdiquerai."[1] Theoretically Louis-Philippe was absolutely within his constitutional rights when refusing to dismiss a Minister who still enjoyed a parliamentary majority, because such Minister happened to be unpopular with a certain class of political agitators. But politically he committed the fault which cost him his throne. M. Guizot himself showed appreciation of the gravity of the situation when he spontaneously offered to retire, as a measure of prudence, at the outset of the fatal session.[2] The King, however, was obstinately immovable: "C'est à moi, à moi personnellement que les banquets se sont attaqués," he exclaimed, "et nous verrons qui sera le plus fort."[3]

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[1] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 326.

In his Speech from the Throne (a document which, as is usual, had been prepared by the Ministers in power) Louis-Philippe confined himself to generalities when dealing with the relations of France with foreign countries. Short references were made to Switzerland, but Italy, where the most portentous events were in progress, was not mentioned.[1] Turning to the consideration of home affairs the King affirmed that, despite the agitation fomented by "hostile or blind passions," he was sustained by the conviction that in the constitutional monarchy, the union of the great powers of the State, were to be found the means for overcoming all obstacles, and the satisfaction of all the moral and material interests of the country. The maintenance of social order by a strict adhesion to the Charter would ensure public liberties and allow of their development. There was nothing reactionary in the tenor of the speech: on the contrary, the aged sovereign appeared animated with the most conciliatory as well as progressive sentiments. But the partisans of the movement inaugurated by the banquets took violent exception to the words "hostile or blind passions." It is said that during the preliminary discussion of the Address, objections had been raised as to the wisdom of this phrase by various framers of the document, but that M. Guizot had insisted on the offensive words being retained, exclaiming, "I wish to carry the war into their camp."[2] In debate the phrase would have passed unnoticed, but put into the mouth of the King it appeared insulting to those members of the Opposition who had sympathized with or taken an active part in the reform campaign. If M. Guizot really desired to carry the war into the enemy's camp, he could not have chosen a more effective method. Given the state of public opinion, the provocation of this comparatively trifling incident was injudicious, to say the least, and indeed it proved the spark which was to set aflame the smouldering embers of revolt. At a meeting held at Odilon Barrot's residence by Opposition members of all shades, — Left, Left Centre, Republicans, and Legitimists, — after having considered the advisability of their resignation *en masse*, it was decided that war to the knife should be declared.[1]

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[1] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 329. It has been said that Louis-Philippe had previously considered abdication and the appointment of his son-in-law, the King of the Belgians, as tutor or regent, during the minority of his grandson, the Comte de Paris. Cf. Duke of Saxe-Coburg, *Aus meinem Leben und meiner Zeit*, vol. I, p. 184.

[2] Cf. Guizot, *Mémoires*, vol. VIII, p. 543.

[3] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 343.

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[1] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 342; cf. also Sir Theodore Martin, *Life of the Prince Consort*, vol. II, p. 2: "The Government of Louis-Philippe had cut itself off from the sympathies of England, and it was known to be pursuing a line of policy both in Switzerland and in Italy which might readily lead to a European war."

[2] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 343.

Although he had taken no personal part in the banquets, Lamartine expressed himself thoroughly in sympathy with his outraged colleagues. An opportunity for addressing the Chamber did not occur until February 11 (1848), but on January 2 he published a scathing letter in "Le Bien Public," upholding the rights of the people to discuss openly and freely the affairs which so closely concerned them. The Speech from the Throne, he maintained, characterized insultingly the expression of opinion which had stirred the country during the last six months, attributing, as it did, to the movement "hostile" or "blind" passions. Such epithets constitute a pronouncement against the legitimate exercise of the right of political assembly for the discussion of sentiments or measures affecting public opinion. The moment, he avers, is singularly ill-chosen. From one end of France to the other such manifestations have taken place without disturbing the public peace or necessitating police intervention of any nature. Such orderly demonstrations of public opinion should not excite the anger of a government truly desirous of popular progress, but inspire admiration and pride. The rare expressions of a seditious nature which had escaped from the mouths of two or three demagogues had speedily been repudiated by the majority of those present. The banquet at Châlon had, indeed, been signalized by the presence of radical orators, but legally and socially it was irreproachable, and had given rise to no public scandal.[1]

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[1] Cf. Guizot, *Mémoires*, vol. VIII, p. 553.

All this was undoubtedly true, yet Lamartine was perfectly aware that the character and aims of the banquets had changed materially, and that extreme revolutionary doctrines had insidiously crept in, not only at Dijon, Autun, and Châlon, but at Rouen and a dozen other places. He had himself rebuked the incendiary tendency of certain theories openly expressed by declared revolutionists such as Flocon, and in a lesser degree Ledru-Rollin. At the same time, he was fully determined to defend energetically the principles which underlay the popular form of protestation against the reactionary policy of the Government, insisting with all his might on the legality of the movement. If his action seems somewhat paradoxical, the explanation must be sought in the peculiar self-confidence of the man. The fact should not be lost sight of that Lamartine honestly believed himself destined to play the rôle of saviour of society when the catastrophe he had so persistently prophesied overwhelmed France. If he was to play this part efficiently, no entangling alliances must hamper his freedom of action. His democratic sympathies — nay, convictions — were well known. For years he had been speaking through the "open windows," over the heads, as it were, of his colleagues in Parliament. None could doubt the sincerity of his opinions, for his acts had been thoroughly in accord with his words. Open revolt he still deprecated: but the hour was at hand when he was to confess himself prepared to face even the gravest consequences in defence of the honour of his country. That he afterwards professed regret, even humiliation, concerning the action he advocated, is a psychological problem which will be examined in due course.

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[1] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 116.

CHAPTER XL

ABDICATION OF LOUIS-PHILIPPE

MEANWHILE events were rapidly approaching a climax, although few of the actors in the drama as yet realized the full import of the complicated situation or its far-reaching consequences. On January 29, 1848, Lamartine mounted the rostrum for the first time in eighteen months, and vehemently denounced the Government's foreign policy in Italy and in respect to the reactionary Sonderbund conflict in Switzerland. As in his articles in the press, he attributed the reversal of the traditional liberal policy of France to the nefarious Spanish marriages, which constituted the negation of the spirit and the essence of the Monarchy of July. "From that day" (the conclusion of the Spanish negotiations) France, against its traditions, had become "Ghibelline at Rome, sacerdotal at Berne, Austrian in Piedmont, Russian at Cracovie, Prussian in Poland, French nowhere, counter-revolutionary everywhere."[1]

Ten days later, on February 11, he took up the burning question of the reform banquets, which, as will be remembered, the Address from the Throne had characterized as the agitation of "hostile and blind passions." Lamartine does not deny that the popular unrest and discontent had been fanned and increased by the speeches and discussions at these political assemblages, which he likened to the *summum jus* of a nation seeking to warn its leaders of their errors and lead them back to an appreciation of their obligations. "I did not assist personally at the reform banquets," he asserts, "for reasons apart from politics; mais *j'y ai participé de cœur*, j'y ai participé d'esprit, *j'en ai accepté le principe et j'en ai accepté d'avance fermement toutes les conséquences.* Oui, il y a eu agitation, une agitation honnête, une agitation salutaire, . . . une agitation qui n'avait rien d'artificiel."[1]

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 148. Cf. also Pietro Silva, *La Monarchia de Luglio e l'Italia* (Turin, Bocca, 1917), p. 425. Silva bitterly reproaches Lamartine for his change of attitude towards Italy when in power a couple of months later, as does also A. Stern, in his *Geschichte Europas seit den Verträgen von 1815 bis zum Frankfurter Frieden von 1870.* Cf. vol. III, p. 526.

Here, at least, was a straightforward, unequivocal declaration of war, combined with a clear and unqualified profession of faith in the legality and righteousness of the campaign the Government sought to discredit. With the dangerous extremists who had joined the ranks of agitators he had no affinities. But together with his colleagues of the Left he had fanned with one hand, while tempering with the other, "the flames of honest indignation and legitimate patriotism which burned only too readily in the souls of his fellow-citizens." The metaphor may be accepted literally, for if Lamartine exerted a restraining influence on occasion, he contributed by his writings and openly expressed sympathy to fan, or popularize, the agitation on the lines which Cobden had advocated. And if electoral reform and the extension of the vote had been the initial object of the banquets, he, more than any other, had contributed to the introduction of repeated censure on the Government's foreign policy and the dynastic selfishness displayed in Spain. Nor does he now seek to limit his own responsibilities. Frankly and clearly he admonished the Ministry that if they persisted in prohibiting the banquet it was proposed to hold in Paris within the next few days, they would be sealing their own doom. After a lengthy political and historical dissertation he wound up his improvisation with an impressive warning not to imitate the foolhardy Ministers of Louis XVI, owing to whose blindness the old régime had perished.

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 155.

Few realized, while they listened to these impassioned words, how swiftly the fulfilment of the prophecy was to overwhelm the stubborn resistance of the dynasty which sought to curb the liberties on which its throne was founded. Yet some were not so blind to the gravity of the crisis. Among the officials who sought to warn the King, the Prefect of Paris, Count de Rambuteau, stands out conspicuously. Again and again he explained to Louis-Philippe that the secret societies were plotting an outbreak, and that many of the National Guards could not be depended upon.[1] The King refused all credit to such alarmist tales, for had he not the positive assurance of Guizot that the Government was fully able to cope with the crisis? As a consequence the Government refused to grant the necessary permission for a banquet fixed for January 19, 1848, and which was to close the campaign. M. Guizot's decision caused little surprise, but great indignation. The Minister had definitely and positively declined to consider the proposed reforms,[2] and he not unnaturally wished to avoid the extra-parliamentary agitation which the Opposition sought to bring to a culminating point in the presence of a meeting composed of official representatives of the people and the leaders of the malcontents of all social classes. On February 7 the discussion on the "Banquets de Réforme" was violently opened by M. Duvergier de Hauranne, who denied the legality of the Government's decision, or "ministerial ukase," as he styled the high-handed proceeding, and called upon his colleagues to defy it. There is reason for the belief, however, that M. Guizot would willingly have made some concessions to the persistent clamour of the reformers, but that he hesitated to do so on his own responsibility, knowing that the King would disavow his action. In a curious volume relating conversations with Louis-Philippe after his flight to England, M. Édouard Lemoine states that the deposed monarch was resolved to abdicate rather than sanction the reforms.[1] The struggle was watched with keenest interest abroad. Lord Palmerston would have welcomed Guizot's downfall, as must also the Liberals in Italy and Switzerland, but in Berlin and Vienna the possible outcome caused considerable alarm.[2]

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[1] *Mémoires du Comte de Rambuteau*, p. 296; cf. also Lord Normanby, *Journal of a Year of Revolution*, vol. I, p. 57.

[2] Guizot, *Mémoires*, vol. VIII, p. 551.

The Committee of the Reform Banquets finally decided to close the long series of this form of manifestation by a monster meeting to be held on February 20, in the Twelfth Arrondissement of Paris. In order to avoid as far as possible the danger of a popular uprising, this comparatively isolated quarter of the city, close to the Arc de Triomphe, was selected in preference to the more central districts. In fact, every desire was apparent on the part of the organizers to avoid disturbing the public peace by the demonstration they planned, which was intended principally as an earnest of their determination to assert their legal rights of public meeting, and to force the Government to prosecute those who attended the banquet. At the outset the Ministry had not proposed to use force to prevent the banquet, but merely to send a commissary of police who should take down the names of those present and arraign them before the courts. The Opposition was unanimous in its decision to accept the judicial battle on these grounds, and everything was arranged in consequence for a pacific demonstration which should exclude, as far as feasible, the purely revolutionary elements which might seize upon the opportunity to bring about an armed conflict.[1] Unfortunately, the impatient Republicans conceived the idea of calling upon the members of the National Guard to attend the ceremony, without arms, but in uniform. Alarmed at the magnitude of the proposed demonstration, the Government rescinded its previous concessions and announced the intention of breaking up the meeting by force. "It is inconceivable folly in the Government," wrote Lord Normanby in his "Journal," "to have provoked such a conflict upon a point where, I am told (if they rely, as hitherto, upon the Act of 1789), the Cour de Cassation are sure, in the last resort, to declare them wrong."[2]

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[1] Cf. *L'Abdication du roi Louis-Philippe racontée par lui-même*, pp. 40–44; cf. also Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, pp. 388–90.

[2] Comte Hübner, *Une année de ma vie*, p. 12.

M. Thureau-Dangin, on the contrary, would seem to believe that the Government was absolutely justified in its decision to prevent the banquet by force, in view of the immense preparations made by all classes to show their sympathy with the movement. A great procession, he asserts, was to accompany the deputies through the town as they marched to the meeting-place. The agitation was becoming general. In all classes of society the banquet was the absorbing theme of conversation. The students were especially excited, while in the faubourgs many workshops announced their intention of closing, and the workmen agreed to march with the crowd. Nor were the secret societies inactive. M. Louis Blanc and other advanced leaders demanded a place in the procession for two or three hundred workmen wearing their characteristic blouses, thus proving that the demonstration was not exclusively *bourgeois* in its component parts.[1] At a meeting held at the residence of M. Odilon Barrot on February 18, by members of the Parliamentary Opposition, to consider what steps should be taken in view of the Government's threat to use force, no decision was reached. On the morrow the same deputies met again at Durand's Restaurant in the Place de la Madeleine; but the opinions of the two hundred members of Parliament present were as diversified and far from harmony as ever. In vain did M. Odilon Barrot, who presided, call upon the tumultuous meeting to consider the issue with calm and dignity. The problem was fraught with such grave consequences, whichever way it was to be solved, that the vast majority of those present hesitated to take definite action in one direction or another. Should the Opposition yield, all its moral authority over the country would be irretrievably forfeited. Should it push its resistance to the last extremity, the cost of victory might include the advent to power of the very elements it dreaded — the Radicals — who desired, and were openly agitating for a revolution at any price. So close an observer as Lord Normanby could not be blind to the gravity of the situation. "There is no doubt," he wrote, "that, in the present state of public opinion, an imposing and perfectly peaceable demonstration, attended by peers and deputies, by almost all the members and all the mayors of Paris, the municipal council, and thousands of National Guards in uniform, would be the death-blow of the present system of government, and such a consequence is no doubt much to be deprecated; but the alternative of a conflict is dreadful, and by no means certain in its result."[2] Nevertheless, the English Ambassador believed that, owing to the immense garrison of regular troops, the triumph of the Government would be complete, should an armed collision become inevitable.

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[1] Cf. Lamartine, *Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 68; cf. also Lord Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 69.

[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 70.

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[1] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 399.

[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 74.

M. Berryer, to whom many of his colleagues looked for wise counsel, only added to the general confusion which reigned at the meeting held at Durand's Restaurant: Lamartine alone among the excited orators succeeded in animating their courage by virtue of his impassioned harangue.[1] In no wise concealing the dangers and difficulties of the situation, or belittling the responsibilities they would assume in the attempt to carry out their original programme, he called upon his colleagues to take definite action, regardless of consequences. What was their situation? he asked them. "We are placed by the provocation of the Government between disgrace and danger." Personal disgrace they might one and all be willing to face; but as representatives of the country they would include France in the shame they must be called upon to bear. Such disgrace they could not put upon their country. It was an act of citizenship they were called upon to perform, and France would be the witness, through the eyes of the people of Paris. Steady and calm they must make this appeal, not to the violence, but to the justice, of their country. Serious dangers there were. But were not the abjuration of the Nation's rights, the acceptance of arbitrary measures, the encouragement of attempted ministerial usurpation, the abasement of the national character before all the foreign governments; were not all these dangers also? The rest was in the hands of God, he assured his hearers; and he prayed that a spirit of order and peace might inspire the multitudes which must inevitably flock to what was intended as a pacific and conservative manifestation of their institutions. "Let us hope that no collision take place between armed and unarmed citizens. Let us conjure all citizens that it may be so. Let us leave the rest to Providence and place the responsibilities on the Government which provokes and alone necessitates this dangerous manifestation." The speaker concealed nothing of the peril of the situation should the soldiers make use of their weapons, but they owed it to their country's rights not to flinch in face of death. Amid prolonged applause the orator sounded this moral call to arms with the exhortation: "Ne délibérons plus, agissons"; adding that if his colleagues refused to attend the banquet, he would go alone, "accompanied by his shadow."[1]

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[1] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 403.

At a meeting held in the offices of "La Réforme" on the evening of the 21st, D'Alton-Shée, speaking in the name of Lamartine, expressed the readiness of many attending the meeting at Odilon Barrot's house to take up arms in the name of Liberty.[2]

It is certain that Lamartine was carried away by his enthusiasm, and that the legality or even the logic of his proposal will not bear close scrutiny. The right of assembly, although, perhaps, the right of every free people, was not specifically set down in the Charter. In consequence the Ministry had not violated the letter of the Constitution, although M. Guizot is open to the accusation of interpreting the spirit for the furtherance of his ends. In counselling his hearers to defy the constituted authority of the land, and practically to place their cause — righteous as it might be — in the hands of the people (which he was well aware meant the mob), Lamartine was guilty of a gross political error. If his object was to overthrow the Ministry, the aim would have been accomplished by the exercise of a little patience, for the Court of Appeal, to which the dispute would have been carried, would most certainly have decided in favour of the deputies, outraged in the free exercise of their rights; and the downfall of M. Guizot and his Cabinet was assured. It is probable that the abdication of Louis-Philippe would have followed as a natural consequence, and the introduction of the desired reforms must inevitably have been accepted by his successor. None felt this more strongly than Lamartine himself, and in after years he bitterly reproached himself with acting under the stress of excitement and without political discernment.

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 168.

[2] Cf. *Souvenirs de 1847 et de 1848*, also A. Crémieux, *La Révolution de Février, 1848*, p. 86; both give fullest details of almost every hour during four whole days.

Rumours were persistently circulated that the Guizot Cabinet had resigned, or was about to resign: in view of the general popular and political effervescence a change of Ministry could not long be delayed.[1] Lamartine could not have been ignorant of the extremely precarious situation of the discredited Ministry. Was he actuated by selfish motives of personal aggrandizement? Did he risk stirring up a revolution in order that he might enact the long contemplated rôle of saviour of society? He acknowledges an outburst of vanity, and this sentiment may at bottom have prompted the rash action he so eloquently advocated. Two days after the memorable gathering of the Parliamentary Opposition at Durand's Restaurant, Lamartine wrote his friend M. Rolland, Mayor of Mâcon, a letter which clearly shows the intense mental excitement under which he was labouring. Demoralization was in the air, he affirmed, and Berryer's words had caused a general stampede of the more timorous elements. This he was called upon to check, and he threw himself heart and soul into the mêlée. "S'il y a des balles dans les fusils," he wrote M. Rolland, "il faudra que les balles brisent ma poitrine pour en arracher le droit de mon pays."[2] There is no mistaking the ring of sincerity in these words. Forty-eight hours after the scene at the

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[1] Cf. Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 76.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCCXVII.

Café Durand, Lamartine was still labouring under the control of passionate conviction. The sacred constitutional rights of his countrymen were, in his judgment, criminally menaced, and, at the cost of his life, he was determined to defend them. In an undated letter, written to the same correspondent after the resignation of Guizot's Ministry, he affirms that he is congratulated on all sides for his action. There is no symptom of hesitation or regret, no doubt as to the wisdom of the course he urged his colleagues to pursue: in every line is apparent self-applause, and unconcealed satisfaction over the discomfiture of the King.[1]

Less than two years later, however, Lamartine thought very differently of his action, which retrospectively loomed dark on his political conscience. His *meâ culpâ* is repeated twice in the "Mémoires politiques,"[2] but the confession he made to M. de Chamborant within a few months of the incident is not only the most comprehensive, but, not being intended for publication, has the ring of a confidential and unpremeditated outpouring. After relating the circumstances which gave rise to the meeting at Durand's, he states that Barrot and several others declared that matters had already gone too far and that they would not attend the banquet. "I believed these men yielded to a feeling of pusillanimity in face of peril, rather than to a well-considered sentiment of patriotism, and, led astray by the false and facile glamour of physical courage, I declared that it was too late to recede, and that even abandoned by all, I would go alone to the banquet. I acknowledge that in this supreme circumstance I acted wrongly, and I bitterly blame myself. I was led by too personal a feeling not to be guilty. In a word, I yielded to the temptation of vanity and pride." And he goes on to praise Odilon Barrot for the exercise of true patriotic courage. As for himself, ill in bed, he had been unable to carry out his threat of going alone, and was consequently consoled by the conviction that he was "complètement innocent de la révolution où fut précipité mon pays."[1] There are many who will hardly agree as to his "complete innocence," although they may readily absolve him of undue blame.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCCXVIII. The date is probably February 23.

[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 75, and vol. IV, p. 456.

Lamartine certainly exaggerated the general effect of his rash advice to his colleagues, for the same afternoon (February 19) a committee consisting of various leaders of the Opposition agreed with friends of the Government to coöperate in an attempt to avert the danger of an insurrectionary conflict, and "reach, without disturbance or violence, by judicial means, the solution of the question of legality which had given rise to the controversy."[2] Louis-Philippe himself was prevailed upon to give his sanction to an arrangement by which, should the banquet be insisted on, the Commissary of Police, stationed at the door, would simply take down the names of the deputies attending, and the whole matter would then be referred to the courts. Meanwhile preparations for the banquet were pushed forward, and the date was fixed for the 22d (a Tuesday) on the lines agreed upon by the Government and the committee. "All seemed peaceful," writes M. Thureau-Dangin, "when on the morning of the 21st, several of the advanced newspapers of the Opposition issued the programme of the demonstration it was proposed to hold on the morrow."[3] M. Marrast, a member of the staff of the "National," and a professed Republican, had drafted this document, calling upon the people and the National Guard to take part in the immense procession which was to escort the deputies to the banqueting hall. Scenting treachery, the Government lost no time in making the preparations necessary to prevent trouble, forbidding public assemblages or the mustering of the National Guard. A hastily called meeting at M. Barrot's house, where M. Thiers urged his colleagues to yield, decided by a vote of eighty to seventeen that the deputies would not take part in the banquet. In vain did Lamartine again point out the disgrace attending retreat; his words had no effect on the "panic-stricken"[1] members of Parliament. At a meeting held at the same place, but which was attended also by the committee which had the organization of the banquet in hand, the discussion culminated with the almost unanimous decision to abandon the proposed demonstration, but to impeach the Ministry. The defection of the deputies had, of course, deprived the event of its representative and official character, and the Government, it was realized, would have no hesitation in suppressing by force a manifestation of a purely popular and avowedly revolutionary nature.

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[1] Baron de Chamborant de Périssat, *Lamartine inconnu*, p. 40.

[2] Guizot, *Mémoires*, vol. VIII, p. 560; cf. also Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 466.

[3] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 411.

Lamartine, and four or five of the most ardent supporters of the party of action at all costs, alone continued the struggle. The deputy from Mâcon reiterated his intention of going alone, "accompanied by my shadow," as he picturesquely expressed it. Whereupon Count d'Alton-Shée immediately announced his intention of marching at the head of the procession, side by side with the intrepid poet.[1] In order to arrange details the handful of dissenting deputies met at Lamartine's house the same evening.[2] But when the news reached them that not only their colleagues of the Opposition, but the extra-parliamentary organizers of the banquet, had definitely decided to give up the whole affair, they quietly separated with the understanding that they would await further developments.[3] Lamartine himself has left but a laconic record of what must have been an extremely interesting discussion. Seven or eight peers and deputies attended and resolved to defy the Government, he tells us. "Quelques instants plus tard," he adds, "ils apprirent qu'aucun banquet n'aurait lieu. Ils se séparèrent." [4]

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[1] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 416. Daniel Stern (Madame d'Agoult), in her *Histoire de la révolution de 1848* (vol. I, p. 97), states that M. Marrast offered the same advice as Lamartine, but Thureau-Dangin, on the authority of M. Duvergier de Hauranne, who was present, positively affirms that M. Marrast, in the name of humanity and love of the people, urged that the banquet be abandoned. "Qu'un conflit s'engage," he is reported as saying, "et la population sera écrasée. Voulez-vous la livrer à la haine de Louis-Philippe et de M. Guizot?" *Op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 417; cf. also Percy St. John, *The French Revolution in 1848*, p. 69, and Crémieux, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

It was the wisest course they could have pursued under the circumstances, for the Government had assembled all available regular troops within the city, and the strategic measures adopted were calculated quickly to suppress insurrectionary outbreaks in the various quarters where such popular uprisings were most apprehended. The next day, Tuesday, February 22, General Jacqueminot's proclamation forbidding the participation of the National Guard in any demonstration, together with an order signed by the Prefect of Police formally prohibiting the banquet, was posted on the walls of Paris. Crowds of disappointed citizens began to assemble on the boulevards, but their attitude was by no means threatening. Little by little these were joined by the less peaceful and order-loving elements from the faubourgs, to which were shortly added the ever-restless and turbulent students, marching to the strains of the "Marseillaise." There was no definite plan or prearranged itinerary, no authorized leaders, yet by a common consent the ever-increasing, heterogeneous multitude drifted, rather than marched, towards the Place de la Concorde and across the river to the Chamber of Deputies. Blouses were in the majority, and their number continually swelled.

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[1] *Souvenirs de 1847 et de 1848*, p. 222.

[2] Cf. *Mémoires de Caussidière*, vol. I, p. 36.

[3] D'Alton-Shée, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

[4] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 77.

Meanwhile at the Tuileries the King warmly congratulated his advisers on remaining firm in their decision, expressing his belief that all was well and that it would have been folly to yield to the demands of the Opposition.[1] Nevertheless, in spite of the military precautions, and the thirty thousand soldiers[2] distributed throughout the streets, a certain uneasiness began to prevail in official circles. Although the mob surrounding the Palais Bourbon (Chamber of Deputies) had been driven back from the immediate precincts of the Chamber, vast multitudes continued to occupy the Place de la Concorde and adjacent thoroughfares. After two o'clock the deputies began to assemble, and on the opening of the session M. Odilon Barrot laid on the table the act impeaching the Government. Only fifty-three members of the Opposition had consented to sign this document — barely half of those present at the meeting held at M. Barrot's residence forty-eight hours previously. M. Odilon Barrot's name headed the list, and his signature was followed by that of M. Duvergier de Hauranne; but Lamartine's is conspicuous by its absence. The discussion of the impeachment having been fixed for the next day but one, the Chamber adjourned. No record exists of Lamartine's presence at this session. In fact, we have his own assertion that he did not leave his dwelling after his friends met there on the evening of the 21st until he appeared at the Chamber on the 24th.[3]

[1] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 422.

[2] Cf. L. Gallois, *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. I, p. 3; most of the authorities agree as to this number.

[3] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 159.

Nevertheless, he listened eagerly to the mixed reports which friends brought him from hour to hour. The situation was, indeed, a confused one, baffling the political acumen of the most experienced. None could pronounce whether they faced insurrection or revolution. Even the leaders of the secret societies hesitated to risk compromising themselves, while the Republicans looked for no definite results. Rioting of the usual mob variety there was, indeed, and minor collisions occurred between the populace and the Municipal Guards. But of bloodshed there was none during February 22.[1] Windows were broken in several public offices, and a hostile demonstration took place in front of M. Guizot's official residence, while repeated cries of "Vive la réforme!" and "À bas Guizot!" alternated with the strains of the "Marseillaise." Towards evening an attack was made on a small guard-house near the Place de la Concorde; an attempt was made to construct a barricade in the rue de Rivoli, a few gunsmiths' shops were broken into, and later a heterogeneous mob set fire to piles of chairs in the Champs Élysées. But thus far the movement was distinctly insurrectionary, and no organized revolution was apparent, or even seriously feared on the one side or desired on the other. Louis-Philippe retired to rest fully assured that victory was once more his, and that on the morrow calm would be found to have been completely reëstablished.

The morning of February 23 dawned chill and rainy, and Paris seemed outwardly quiet. Before nine o'clock, however, rioting was in progress in various quarters. Yet the disturbances were sporadic: no popular leaders of any sect directed the mob in the erection of the barricades which began to span the narrower streets. At several points the troops were attacked, or rather molested, by the rioters, and here and there, during a charge through the crowd, people were wounded, some fatally. The military occupation of Paris had been decided on the previous evening, but the soldiers, while observing scrupulous discipline, were only half-hearted and loath to act energetically. A partial attempt to enrol the National Guard had given but meagre results the evening before; but it was now felt that in spite of the danger of defection it would be impolitic not to make a general appeal to this popular arm to quell the growing disturbance. Although they responded in considerable numbers, it was evident that the spirit which animated this corps was not favourable to the Government. From their ranks rose cries for reform, and the demand that the King be forced to change his Ministers. There was talk of arresting Guizot and conducting him to the dungeons of Vincennes.[1]

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[1] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 431; *contra*, David Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 111, and L. Gallois, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 5. Lamartine (*Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 80) asserts that no blood was shed.

Gradually the news spread that the National Guard would not support the Government, and little by little it became evident that the regular troops, although they might not be in sympathy with the insurrectionists, would avoid any collision with the disaffected regiments. At the Tuileries the alarming reports which poured in created consternation. The Queen herself now urged her husband to accede to the popular demand and to dismiss Guizot forthwith, and the old monarch, dreading civil war, began to be shaken in his resolution to enforce his will. "J'ai vu assez de sang," he kept repeating to himself as he listened to the arguments of those surrounding him, and at last he yielded and sent for the unpopular Minister. When M. Guizot returned to the Chamber, and with considerable dignity announced that the King had sent for Count Molé and charged him with the formation of a new Cabinet, pandemonium broke loose within the walls. Mad and furious accusations of treachery were hurled at their late chief by those who had supported him, while the benches of the Opposition gave vent to equally tumultuous joy. There can be little doubt but that Louis-Philippe's tardy action, in dismissing M. Guizot under the circumstances above related, contributed as effectively to his overthrow as his stubborn resistance to the reforms. That the armed intervention of National Guards should be necessary to force a change of Ministry from a sovereign whose reign began behind barricades seemed as incomprehensible to Lord Normanby as it did to the populace. "There was always a distrust of the King's sincerity," wrote the British Ambassador; "there is no longer any belief in his sagacity, since he has been so blind to the signs of public opinion."[1] The truth of this assertion was speedily to be proven.

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[1] Maxime du Camp, *Souvenirs*, p. 49.

As soon as he arrived at the Tuileries M. Molé, thanking the King for his confidence, frankly informed him that at the present issue he felt himself powerless to stem the rising tide. "The banquets are victorious," he stated. "It is now for those who organized the banquets to quell the movement. The only advice I can give the King is to call MM. Barrot and Thiers."[2] Yet, yielding to the King's pressing requests, M. Molé at once set forth to ascertain whether the statesmen he had named would be willing to aid him in the task of constituting a cabinet. This combination seemed calculated to satisfy the requirements formulated by the National Guard,[3] and to pacify the agitation aroused by the Government's refusal to permit the reformist banquet. Indeed, such would appear to have been the case, for the crowds which filled the streets clamoured for the illumination of the public buildings as a sign of the popular rejoicing, and in several instances the request was carried out. When the mob reached the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at that time situated on the Boulevard des Capucines, it found the thoroughfare blocked by a battalion of the Fourteenth Regiment of the line, and further progress was thus made impossible. Angered by the refusal of the officer in command to allow them to pass, the mob pressed on the soldiers, insulting and twitting them; while cries of "Down with Guizot!" "Vive la réforme!" and imperious demands that the building be illuminated rent the air. Suddenly a shot rang out, none knew whence, and the troops, believing they were attacked, fired a volley into the seething crowd. A movement of panic ensued — a panic shared strangely enough by mob and soldiers alike; breaking their ranks the troopers fled in disorder through the adjacent streets, pell-mell with the scudding rioters. The pavements were strewn with torches, flags, hats, sticks, umbrellas, and firearms, and in pools of blood lay about fifty dead or wounded.[1]

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[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 87.

[2] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 450.

[3] Daniel Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 119.

The whole fateful incident was so sudden, so unexpected, that even to-day no satisfactory explanation is forthcoming. Much has been written concerning the "coup de pistolet de Lagrange," but trustworthy authorities affirm that this scatter-brained demagogue was far distant from the scene of action at the time. Be this as it may, the incident was the signal for the outburst of popular fury which followed. The bodies of the unfortunate victims were paraded through the streets; workmen in blouses, with flaring torches, accompanied the dread procession, crying for vengeance. "Aux armes!" "Aux barricades!" responded the mob, amid the din and clang of the church-bells pealing forth the tocsin. In a trice the whole city seemed in an uproar.

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[1] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 455.

It was ten o'clock when the King heard of the catastrophe. M. Molé had not yet returned to the Tuileries. About midnight Louis-Philippe was informed that all attempts to form a ministry had failed. Nine precious hours had been lost since the resignation of M. Guizot's Cabinet. Distasteful as was the fact, the only course now open to the King seemed to be to call on M. Thiers. Meanwhile public safety demanded the immediate appointment of Marshal Bugeaud to the general command — a necessity which had been repeatedly advocated during the previous day. At half-past one in the morning the Marshal arrived at the Palace, and, in view of the gravity of the crisis, accepted the thankless task with which he was entrusted. But M. Molé's failure to form a ministry had left France without a legal government, and the King found himself compelled to seek the aid of Thiers, who, summoned in haste, arrived at the Tuileries at half-past two.

While professing his willingness to come to the aid of the Crown, M. Thiers insisted on having as his colleagues MM. Odilon Barrot, Duvergier de Hauranne, and De Rémusat, and as his programme the acceptance of the electoral reform and the dissolution of the Chamber. After a lengthy discussion the unfortunate King agreed, in principle, and the remainder of the night was devoted to completing the Cabinet. On all sides violent opposition was raised to the appointment of Marshal Bugeaud, as it was felt hostile action on his part would antagonize the National Guard, to whom Thiers and his friends looked for the reëstablishment of public order. Meanwhile the Marshal had made his dispositions, together with General Bedeau, for the military occupation of the city and the forcible suppression of the insurrection. The reasons why this programme was not put into effect are complex, but there is ground for the belief that Marshal Bugeaud himself sought a place in the Thiers Cabinet, in order that, as Minister of War of a Liberal Ministry, he might overcome the unpopularity he at present experienced.[1] Whatever his considerations may have been, early in the morning of the 24th orders were issued to cease firing at all points, and the public was informed that an agreement had been reached, and that the National Guard would assume the duties of policing the town; to which were added notices that, making use of his constitutional prerogatives, the King had charged Thiers and Barrot with the formation of a cabinet, and that His Majesty had confided to Marshal le duc d'Isly (Bugeaud) the supreme command of the National Guard and all the line regiments. It is possible the suggestion came from the members of the Cabinet Thiers was in the act of forming.[2]

It was too late for conciliatory measures, however; the mob had tasted blood. Barricades sprang up in all directions: over fifteen hundred being counted, nearly all in the hands of Republicans. The proclamations announcing the formation of the Thiers Ministry were torn down and trampled under foot, for the name of Bugeaud was hateful to the populace, on account of his cruel suppression of the riots in April, 1834. No faith was given to the news that Thiers and Barrot had been entrusted with power. In vain did Barrot himself parade the streets announcing the change of Ministry. The angry crowds greeted him with hostile cries, reproaching him with being himself a dupe, and shouting: "Down with Thiers!" "Down with Bugeaud!" "The People are the masters!" "Down with Louis-Philippe!"[3] All doubt was now at an end: it was no longer an insurrection, but a full-fledged revolution, which was in progress. Already the mob was demanding to be led to the Tuileries, and when M. Barrot reached his own residence, escorted by a clamouring crowd, he found there an assemblage of deputies, journalists, and members of the central committee of the banquets, many of whom favoured the abdication of the King. Except in the streets the word "Republic" was scarcely breathed aloud; yet all realized that no other solution of the political crisis was now possible.

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[1] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 470, who cites a letter to Thiers written during the night, in which the Marshal offers himself as Minister of War.

[2] Cf. Daniel Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 151.

[3] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 478; also Daniel Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 159.

Meanwhile, at the Tuileries news of the spread of the revolt and of the increasing and fatal collisions between the mob and soldiery was causing serious alarm. The royal family, assembled round the breakfast table, was constantly interrupted by the unceremonious arrival of political men, aides-de-camp, and messengers of all sorts, each adding to the confusion already existing. Thiers, finding the prestige of his name insufficient to meet the extreme crisis, counselled the King to place everything in the hands of Odilon Barrot. But an hour later it was recognized that even this concession was inadequate, and that only the abdication of the sovereign could save the situation. "The life of the King is in danger," M. de Rémusat assured the aged monarch; and Thiers and others confirmed this opinion, counselling retirement to Saint-Cloud or some fortress.[1] A moment later an aide-de-camp of General Bedeau arrived, bringing news that the mob was retreating from the Place de la Concorde. Acting on the advice of those surrounding him, Louis-Philippe hastily donned his uniform of General of the National Guard, and slipping the Legion of Honour around his shoulders, sallied forth into the court of the Tuileries to review the troops assembled there. Here and there as he passed down the line he was greeted with a cry of "Vive le roi!" Yet, as he progressed, the clamour for reform silenced the loyal exclamations. Discouraged by the ill-concealed hostility of the men on whom he relied for protection, the ill-fated sovereign returned to the Palace, leaving Marshal Bugeaud to continue the review.

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[1] Daniel Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 167.

Lamartine, in his "Histoire de la Révolution de 1848," published within a year of the events described, asserts that an officer, M. de Prébois, in his eagerness to arrest the effusion of blood, attempted to parley with the multitude. "You want reform," he shouted. "It is promised you. You asked that the Ministers be dismissed. They are dismissed. Who are the men enjoying your confidence in whose hands you are willing to entrust your liberties and the execution of your wishes? The King has just nominated M. Thiers. Are you satisfied?" To which the mob yelled, "No! No!" "Then he will appoint M. Barrot." Again the angry crowd refused. "Would you lay down your arms," shouted the would-be pacificator, "if the King called M. de Lamartine?" "Lamartine! Long live Lamartine!" cried the multitude. "Yes! Yes! There is the man we need. Let the King give us Lamartine, and all can still be arranged. We have confidence in that one." "But," adds the author of these lines, "Lamartine enjoyed the confidence neither of the King nor of M. Thiers nor of those devoted to Barrot, not even that of the Republicans of the 'National' or the 'Réforme.' He stood alone."[1] Contemporaneous chronicles contain no mention of this incident; but it is not impossible that M. de Prébois did harangue a group, or groups, of insurrectionists, mentioning the name of Lamartine as one likely to meet with the confidence of the people in a crisis. Lamartine often boasted that in parliamentary debates he spoke "through the window," meaning that his words were intended for the populace. Nevertheless, the historical accuracy of the above-quoted incident is doubtful, resting entirely on the authority of Lamartine himself. The implication, however, that he, Lamartine, had no connection with the republican party of the "National" and "Réforme" is misleading. No irrefutable proof exists, it is true, that Lamartine had direct dealings with this party; yet when the crisis was reached, the Republicans turned instinctively and confidently to him before the opening of the last session, when the fate of the monarchy, as represented by a regency, still hung in the balance.

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[1] Lamartine, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 114.

The question has been raised as to whether Lamartine was a Freemason, or in sympathy with one or several of the secret societies, foreign and domestic, which swarmed in Paris during the reign of Louis-Philippe.[1] Here again no documentary evidence is available, yet it is permissible to presume that the members of such sects or societies looked to Lamartine (perhaps as an unconscious instrument) for the furtherance of their schemes, while realizing the latent conservatism of his social and political theories.

Midday was near at hand, when suddenly M. de Girardin, pale and greatly agitated, burst into the King's study brandishing a sheet of paper, and, on being questioned, replied that there was not a minute to lose; that the People would have nothing of Thiers or Barrot, but demanded the immediate abdication of the King, the regency of the Duchess of Orleans, the dissolution of the Chamber, and a general amnesty.[2] Dumbfounded, Louis-Philippe gazed at those surrounding him. After a moment of agonized suspense, the Duc de Montpensier impatiently urged the same course, and repeated cries of "Abdication!" "Abdication!" reaching his ears from various quarters, the aged monarch, apparently dazed by the enormity of the demand, murmured wearily, "I abdicate." On hearing the words, the Duc de Montpensier, followed by several persons present, left the room in order to announce the King's decision to those waiting outside. Slowly rising from his seat Louis-Philippe opened the door into the drawing-room where the Queen, the Duchess of Orleans, the little Comte de Paris, and other members of the royal family were waiting, repeating the words aloud: "I abdicate." In vain did Marie Amélie, sobbing and embracing her husband, urge the King to reconsider his decision; in vain did the Duchess of Orleans throw herself at his feet, implore her father-in-law to be firm and face his enemies; in vain also did M. Piscatory warn that "L'abdication, c'est la république dans une heure," — adding that an energetic attitude could even yet save the monarchy: Louis-Philippe, although hesitating, seemed incapable of decisive action. The din of firearms was already clearly discernible, and the Duc de Montpensier kept drawing attention to the imminence of the peril. Hastily he pushed pen and paper before the King, almost roughly urged speed, and impatiently waited while his father collected his scattered thoughts.[1] With difficulty Louis-Philippe wrote and signed the following document: "J'abdique cette couronne que la volonté nationale m'avait appelé à porter, en faveur de mon petit-fils, le comte de Paris. Puisse-t-il réussir dans la grande tâche qui lui échoit aujourd'hui. Paris, le 24 février, 1848." A moment later the scrawl was in the hands of a messenger charged with delivering it to Marshal Gérard. But the Marshal could not be found, and passing from one to another the paper finally fell into the possession of the insurgents.[2]

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[1] Cf. Maurice Barrès, "Un déjeuner lamartinien," *Écho de Paris*, April 11, 1913; *contra*, André Lebey, *Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte et la révolution de 1848*, vol. I, p. 47.

[2] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 490; also Daniel Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 171.

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[1] Daniel Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 173.

[2] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 494.

In the interval carriages had been made ready, and almost as the mob invaded the Tuileries, the King and Queen, accompanied by members of the royal family and a handful of faithful friends, left the Palace on foot, and, joining the conveyances on the Place de la Concorde, hastily drove towards Saint-Cloud. Practically alone, surrounded by the remnants of her suite, the Duchess of Orleans, with her sons, took refuge in her apartments, anxiously awaiting the arrival of those authorized to proclaim the Regency.

Since the evening of the 21st, when during a conference with his parliamentary colleagues news of the definite abandonment of the banquet had been received, Lamartine had remained within doors. But although he took no part in the scenes enacted on the streets, it is certain that every phase of the drama, during its evolution from insurrection to revolution, was speedily and accurately reported to him by the friends who were in uninterrupted touch with the leaders of the movement. Always suspected of republican sympathies in spite of his refusal to commit himself openly to the cause, Lamartine's name was deemed a considerable asset in the councils of those who began to discern in the popular disturbances the germs of an agitation favourable to their ideals. In the editorial dens of such newspapers as the "National" and "Réforme" it was felt that the influence of this eloquent advocate of democratic liberties could hardly be overestimated, and that every effort must be made to secure his coöperation. Although irrefutable documentary evidence is lacking, the assumption seems plausible, in view of subsequent events, that Lamartine was sounded during the twenty-four hours preceding the abdication of Louis-Philippe as to the opportunism of the proclamation of the Republic as soon as the retirement of the aged King should have taken place.

Lamartine himself assures us that he was "étranger à toute espèce de conjuration contre la monarchie,"[1] and it is probable that he took no active part in the plots which were hatched in the republican committee-rooms. Nevertheless, with or without his consent, but assuredly with his knowledge, his name was constantly in the mouths, if not on the lists, of those who were directing the turbid stream of mob violence into the channels which should conduct public opinion to the acceptance of the Republic. An unconfirmed rumour was current that, prior to the abdication of the King in favour of his grandson, Ferdinand Flocon, later a member of the Provisional Government, had come to an understanding with Lamartine concerning the rejection of the Regency of the Duchess of Orleans. Unauthenticated as this report is, it is hardly conceivable that Lamartine was wholly unprepared for the offers made him on his arrival at the Palais Législatif at noon of February 25. Nor does Lamartine's energetic protest, in his "Mémoires politiques," concerning any personal relations between himself and the specifically mentioned "National" and "Réforme," carry conviction.[2] We have the authority of so conscientious an historian as M. Thureau-Dangin, late perpetual secretary of the French Academy, and whose monumental work on the July Monarchy has been frequently cited in these pages, for the following anecdote. Describing the incident (which will be dealt with in detail in its place) M. Thureau-Dangin asserts that one of his interlocutors, M. Bocage, an actor at the Odéon Theatre, "went to Lamartine a few hours before the crisis, and in the name of his friends of the 'Réforme' said to him: 'Help us to make the Republic, and we will give you the first place.' The bargain, as proposed, was accepted."[1] M. Duvergier de Hauranne, in his unpublished memoirs, vouches for the accuracy of this assertion. There would consequently appear to exist a reasonable foundation for the belief that Lamartine, accurately informed as to the true situation, had made his decision before he attended the session in the Palais Bourbon.[2]

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 159.

[2] Cf. *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 163–72.

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[1] *Histoire de la monarchie de Juillet*, vol. VII, p. 505. M. Thureau-Dangin died in 1913.

[2] "Il se jette et jette avec lui son pays dans cet inconnu formidable," says M. Thureau-Dangin, " moins en tribune factieux qu'en acteur curieux d'un rôle tragique, sans conviction sérieuse, mais sans hésitation, sans passion profonde, mais sans remords, sans haine, mais sans pitié." *Op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 505.

CHAPTER XLI

THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

At half-past ten on the morning of February 24, 1848, while still confined to his bed, Lamartine was roused by the hasty entrance of a friend who informed him that the invasion of the Chamber of Deputies by the populace was imminent. Although he doubted the possibility of such an outrage, he immediately prepared to stand by his colleagues in the hour of peril. "La popularité d'estime dont il jouissait dans la Chambre et au dehors," he wrote, "pouvait rendre sa présence utile et son intervention protectrice pour la vie des citoyens ou des députés."[1] This would appear an admission of preparedness; although he immediately adds that he then believed the political issues settled and the crisis averted — a statement susceptible to doubt in view of his recent negotiations with the actor Bocage.[2] On his arrival at the Palais Bourbon, Lamartine relates that he exchanged a few words with General Perrot, who was unaware of the flight of the King, and he conveys the impression that he was at this moment himself in ignorance of this capital event, and that he entered the building reassured as to the fate in store for his colleagues. And yet those who were awaiting him in the vestibule were fully acquainted with the drama just enacted, and alive to the perils as well as the possibilities of the political situation. It was high noon when Louis-Philippe left the Tuileries and started on the road to exile: 1.10 by the clock when the mob invaded the Palace.[1] By noon the deputies began to assemble in the Chamber; at one o'clock M. Sauzet, in spite of the absence of the Ministry, yielded to pressure and opened the session.[2] Shortly before, M. Thiers had arrived and confirmed the rumours of the flight of the King, stating at the same time that he feared it was too late to save the regency, that the soldiery would be powerless to prevent the invasion of the Chambers; after which he left and was seen no more. But, although no member of the Government appeared, the republican leaders were already present, mostly journalists from the offices of the "National."

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 160.

[2] Daniel Stern (*op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 225) asserts that negotiations were in progress for three days between Lamartine and the committees of the "National" and the "Réforme"; i.e., February 21, 22, and 23.

Up to noon there had been few whose ambitions went further than the abdication of the King; but later there was talk of a republic. Even before the flight of Louis-Philippe was generally known, the politicians assembled had agreed that a Provisional Government was imperative, and a list of members had been prepared.[3] The names mentioned did not include that of Lamartine, it is true, but the other members of the Government, as eventually constituted, were inscribed on the list prepared in the offices of the "National" before the session opened. If the name of Lamartine was absent from the original list of the "National," there can be but one explanation, and that is the uncertainty as to the result of the mission undertaken on behalf of the "Réforme" by M. Bocage.[4] It is comprehensible that Lamartine, before irremediably compromising his political future, was anxious to reconnoitre personally the currents of public opinion which his indisposition had prevented him from fathoming otherwise than by hearsay. It is safe also to assume that if a bargain had been made with M. Bocage, it had been a conditional one, subject to the temper he might note when face to face with the realities of the situation. If we may credit Lamartine's account of the proceedings, the President had not yet declared the session open when he arrived. This would consequently indicate between half-past twelve and one o'clock as the hour when the confabulation with the emissaries of the "National" and "Réforme" took place.[1] Lamartine does not name the spokesman who on behalf of those present addressed him at the secret meeting, which was held in a remote committee-room; but it is probable that the speech he puts into the mouth of a single individual was in reality a synopsis of the arguments advanced by Hetzel, Bocage, Bastide, and Marrast, amongst others present.[2]

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[1] Maxime du Camp, *Souvenirs*, p. 94.

[2] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 503.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 504.

[4] Cf. Daniel Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 225.

Contrasted with the very decided opinions expressed in the offices of the newspapers above mentioned, the somewhat tentative language used in explaining their case to Lamartine is surprising. "Does he believe France ripe for a republican régime?" they ask; "or would the Regency appear in his eyes a useful preparation for the more democratic system to follow in due course?" Should he become a minister in the transitory government, they assure him of their loyal support. In fact, to Lamartine they would appear to confide the solution of the crisis, expressing their willingness to follow his lead unreservedly. At the same time they make no concealment of their frankly republican principles, which, they assure him, will ever be the object of their every action and endeavour. Decided as they may be to adjourn decisive action should the interests of their country demand it, it must be distinctly understood that forbearance on their part will be only temporary, and that the Regency can be considered only as the stepping-stone to the Republic. "You are in our eyes the man of the situation. What you decide shall be done. The republican party gives itself unreservedly to you. We are ready to undertake formally to place you at the head of the revolution which surges against the doors of this Chamber, to support you with our votes, our newspapers, our secret societies, with the disciplined forces we control among the people. Your cause shall be our cause. Minister of the Regency in the eyes of France and Europe, you will be for us the Minister of the real Republic."[1] Covering his eyes with his hands, Lamartine demanded a few moments' reflection to consider the terrible responsibilities which confronted him. When at length he spoke, it was to pronounce against the Regency and in favour of the Republic. Disclaiming the desire to force any special form of government upon the people, he nevertheless recognizes the futility, in the face of existing circumstances, of a Regency which could be but the mask disguising the more democratic system. Foreseeing one of the greatest social and political crises France had been called upon to contend with, Lamartine discerns salvation through the people alone. And by this he means a republic which shall embrace the interests of all classes: a government of the people which shall save the people from the horrors of anarchy, civil war, and foreign intervention. There must be no half measures: a Regency could only mean a compromise. For these reasons he told his hearers that he decided definitely for the Republic.

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, p. 164. Léonard Gallois (*op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 83) states that the session was opened at 12.30 P.M.

[2] Cf. P. Quentin-Bauchart, *Lamartine homme politique*, p. 143; cf. Daniel Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 226.

In his "History of the Revolution of 1848," M. Garnier Pagès asserts that it was then and there agreed that Lamartine should himself bring forward the motion for the immediate establishment of a Provisional Govern-

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[1] Lamartine, *Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 165.

LAMARTINE IN 1848

From an engraving by Pelée after the lithograph from life by Maurin, May, 1848

ment, but that nothing was said as to the composition of such a government.[1] Meanwhile, in another committee-room, a similar conclave was assembled under the leadership of a youthful republican, M. Arago, with the object of persuading M. Odilon Barrot to accept their programme.[2] In his capacity of Minister, however, and despite the fact that, strictly speaking, since the abdication and flight of the King, he was responsible to no legally constituted authority, M. Barrot very rightly refused to consider any premeditated action until Parliament should have had an opportunity of dealing with the crisis.

Lamartine had hardly entered the Chamber before the Duchess of Orleans appeared, leading her two sons by the hand, and accompanied by a vociferating, although not entirely hostile, mob. On the entrance of the Duchess the Assembly rose to its feet, amidst cries of "Vive la duchesse d'Orléans!" "Vive le comte de Paris!" "Vive le Roi!" "Vive la Régente!"[3] M. Dupin, who had accompanied the Duchess from the Tuileries, mounted the rostrum, and, announcing the abdication of Louis-Philippe, proclaimed the Regency. But Lamartine, rising in his seat, demanded that the session be suspended owing to the presence of the Duchess in the midst of the national representatives, whose liberty of deliberation would be impaired by this untoward situation.[4] The Duchess refusing to leave the Chamber, a heated discussion arose, during which the President, M. Sauzet, actually suspended the session. No heed was taken, however, of the President's action, for the crowd was pressing at the doors in ever-increasing numbers, while various

[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 197.

[2] Cf. Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 509.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 506.

[4] Lamartine, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 182; cf. also Dr. Véron, *Mémoires d'un bourgeois de Paris*, vol. IV, p. 294, and Von Schubert's *Life and Letters of the Duchesse d'Orléans* (published in 1859). Schubert affirms that the Duchess made several attempts to speak, but that her voice was drowned in the tumult. *Op. cit.*, p. 214.

orators struggled to reach the rostrum. In vain, however, did the Duchess herself attempt to urge the rights of her son; in vain did M. Barrot essay to calm the tumult, naïvely threatening to resign should his advice not be accepted; in vain did M. de la Rochejacquelein warn his colleagues that they no longer possessed any legal standing, and that an appeal to the Nation must be made. Pandemonium reigned supreme, for the mob had forced the doors, and a vast medley of armed men, National Guards, workmen, and students waving flags and guns, burst into the Chamber to the cries of "Down with the Regency!" "Banishment!"

Lord Normanby, while recognizing M. Barrot's influence, believes that at this moment his advent was inauspicious, inasmuch as it brought into hostile action the master-spirit of the moment. "All the witnesses of the scene," he writes, "with whom I have spoken, concur in this, that M. Lamartine had hitherto buried his face in his hands, as if absorbed in meditation as to the course he should pursue, but as M. Odilon Barrot slowly ascended the tribune, he threw back his head, gazed fixedly upon him, and his whole attitude was that of defiance and opposition. I am far from asserting that his first feeling was, if the Regency is adopted, there stands its counsellor and director, but there is something in M. Odilon Barrot's deportment, and a certain air of conscious integrity blended with superior wisdom, which was likely to be peculiarly irritating to M. Lamartine's susceptibility. He had too much imagination, and, one may add, too much expansive benevolence, where his *amour-propre* is not affected, to be a very accurate analyst of human weakness, but he must be aware that the disposition of all men's minds is to deny in others any combination of eminent qualities — ready to allow to any one only his *spécialité*, as we say here; and that in admiring him for his brilliancy as a poet and inspired writer, every one was predisposed not to recognize in him a statesman of practical wisdom or habits of business, and here he found himself brought in contact with the man whose assumption of those very qualities found ready belief with all."[1]

A grain of truth is certainly contained in this analysis; yet we know that, although M. Barrot's personality and his present attitude may have irritated Lamartine, the latter's decision had been reached before the episode which Lord Normanby describes, and that in consequence M. Barrot's bearing could have had no direct influence on the course followed. If Lamartine had entertained jealous feelings towards M. Barrot in the past, he certainly had no reason to experience them during the stormy session of February 24, 1848. Amidst this terrific uproar Lamartine fought his way to the rostrum. A thunder of applause greeted him. This ovation, writes M. Thureau-Dangin, put heart into the partisans of the Duchess, for they recalled the fact that in 1842 he had been the advocate of a feminine regency.[2] Alas! their illusions were but short-lived. Lamartine has said that a word for the Duchess would have swayed the Chamber *en masse*, and through them the people, in her favour. And, when reviewing the situation, he expresses the conviction that he had it in his power to reëstablish the Throne, and to lead the Duchess and her children triumphantly back to the Tuileries.[3] It is permissible to doubt the accuracy of this assumption. None better than Lamartine recognized that the monarchy was irretrievably discredited in the eyes of the people, and although, when reviewing the scene in later years, he might, for appearance' sake, endeavour to mitigate the seeming brutality of his action, it is the poet, the man of transcendental imagination, not the statesman, who wields the pen. "In sacrificing his popularity for a temporary expedient, foredoomed," writes M. de Vogüé, "Lamartine would have wasted the influence which arrested the red flag and saved his country's honour."[1]

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[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 120.

[2] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 511.

[3] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 183. Von Schubert (*op. cit.*, p. 214) passes over this incident in silence.

There was, in fact, little sentiment and considerable common sense in the words he uttered on this memorable occasion. Those who expected an outburst of lyrical eloquence, inspired by the dramatic aspect of the scene, were doomed to disappointment, although his opening words might seem favourable to the trembling mother, encircling with her arms the orphans of the popular Prince whose inheritance she claimed for her eldest born. "Gentlemen," he began, "I share as much as any one present the double sentiment which distracts this assembly when viewing one of the most touching spectacles which human annals can show, that of an august princess defending herself and her innocent son, and flying from a deserted palace to take shelter amid the people's representatives."[2] The ambiguity of sentiment expressed gave rise to various demonstrations, some applauding, others openly and menacingly expressing discontent. But the speaker refused to allow himself to be diverted, and, slowly repeating his initial remarks, proceeded with a fine rhetorical *exposé* of the situation which left little doubt in the minds of his listeners as to the nature of the peroration to follow. In truth the demands he made were perfectly clear: a Provisional Government which should administer impartially the public business until such time as the country, through its electorate, should decide on the permanent form to be adopted. To this the orator attempted to add certain recommendations concerning the arrangements to be made for the preservation of public order, but was interrupted by the arrival of the insurrectionists led by Dunoyer— the same who had sacked the Tuileries shortly before. It was no longer the monarchy these savages sought to destroy— that was an accomplished fact: their wrath was directed against the deputies themselves. As they broke down the doors and rushed into the hemicycle, it was with curses and yells of "Down with the Chamber!" "Death to the corrupt deputies!"

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[1] *Heures d'histoire*, p. 210.

[2] Cf. *Moniteur*, of February 25, 1848. In his *Mémoires* Lamartine slightly varies the phrase. Cf. vol. II, p. 204.

Lamartine calmly stood his ground, and did not flinch even when a ragged reprobate deliberately aimed his musket at him. Seeing the gesture, however, Sergeant Duvillard caught the arm of the would-be murderer, turning the weapon aside. "If he kills me, I die at my post," quietly remarked Lamartine. But terror seized upon the Assembly, and a general *sauve qui peut* followed. Carried along with the throng, the Duchess of Orleans and her children were swept out of the Chamber. The President, M. Sauzet, was unceremoniously hustled out with the rest; but Lamartine and about twenty of the members of the Left remained at their posts. Ever more boisterous grew the mob, clamouring now for the proclamation of the Provisional Government; in other words, the Republic. Calls for Lamartine echoed through the hall when M. Dupont de l'Eure, who had been pushed into the vacant presidential chair, attempted to read the list of names proposed for membership in the Government. Taking the paper from the old man's hands, Lamartine stepped forward, and in a ringing voice stated that in obedience to the will of the people a Provisional Government would be proclaimed. Then followed the reading of the names submitted for approval. M. Dupont de l'Eure, Lamartine, Arago, Crémieux, Ledru-Rollin, Marie, appeared to meet the wishes of the mob; but the confusion was so great that any unanimous acceptance was impossible.[1] As M. Thureau-Dangin justly remarks: "In the Palais Bourbon a Parliament no longer existed: it was but a club, and what a club!"[2] To put an end to the tumult Bocage continued shouting: "À l'Hôtel de Ville! Lamartine en tête!" And finally this course was adopted, Lamartine and Dupont de l'Eure proceeding in triumph through the crowded streets.

Lamartine asserts that his friends wished to install the Government in the official residence of the President of the Chamber, but that he insisted on proceeding to the Hôtel de Ville. His reasons for so doing were that he recognized the fact that any government taking its seat elsewhere than in the general quarters of the revolution would be attacked and ousted by the counter-revolutionists during the night, and that a bloody civil strife must ensue.[3] Meanwhile, an attempt was made to wreck the Chamber, and the portrait of Louis-Philippe was riddled with bullets. It was four o'clock: the session, if session it can be called, had lasted over two and a half hours. A handful of republican journalists, aided by an irresponsible, undisciplined mob, had overturned a government which had been established by popular acclamation eighteen years before. The catastrophe seemed incredible to thinking men. Lord Normanby, amongst others, stood aghast at the suddenness of the storm and the magnitude of the havoc. "One cannot believe," he wrote in his "Journal" on the evening of this eventful day,— "one cannot believe that a great nation like this can really submit permanently to the dictation of a few low demagogues, none of them, except Lamartine, of any personal following, but hoisted into power by base desertion of duty on the part of all the armed forces, and at the pleasure of the very scum of the earth. In any other country, at any other time, I should say there was sure to be a reaction; but Louis-Philippe's reign has so completely demoralized public feeling, there is now nothing to look to. Such is unfortunately the general opinion as to the Revolution of July, that when the mob carried away the throne from the Tuileries to-day, they said they did so because he had stolen it."[1]

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[1] Lamartine mentions the name of Garnier-Pagès on this list, but other authorities affirm that this name, as well as that of Ledru-Rollin, was added to a supplementary list, proclaimed after Lamartine had left the Chamber.

[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 513.

[3] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 215.

During these scenes, throughout the city the officers in command of the regular troops impatiently waited for orders which were not forthcoming. One after another the regiments fraternized with the populace, either allowed themselves to be disarmed, or, disbanding, joined the crowds in proclaiming the Republic. M. Barrot, after the invasion of the Chamber, sought refuge at the Ministry of the Interior, and thence essayed a semblance of government, instructing the different mayors to assemble the National Guard, and make a last effort in favour of the Regency.[2] These functionaries, however, were inclined to recognize no other government than that which had now been established at the Hôtel de Ville, with Lamartine at its head. Shortly after, M. Marie arrived at the Ministry of Interior, and M. Barrot, declining to take part in the new Government, left him in possession. Acting on the advice of M. Barrot, who had joined her at the Invalides, the Duchess of Orleans, with her children, decided to leave Paris for Germany. It may be mentioned here, *en passant*, that Louis-Philippe and the old Queen, after most trying experiences, travelling by devious roads under the name of M. and Madame Lebrun, finally embarked at Havre, on March 2, and safely reached England the next day. There they were ultimately joined by all the members of the royal family, whose adventures during their flight had been more or less exciting and painful.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 96.

[2] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 519.

On foot, escorted by eight or ten National Guards and a handful of deputies, Lamartine set out for the Hôtel de Ville. An ever-increasing crowd of men, women, and children, mostly armed, and all loudly vociferating, surrounded and followed him. The anguish of uncertainty weighed heavily upon the statesman, who felt that he risked not only life, but reputation, in the venture. What was this farcical election, carried out by a howling mob at the foot of a rostrum taken by storm and held by the invading multitude? What could it be but usurpation? The authority of those elected by this handful of unauthorized voters must surely be contested by those who had had no hand in the proceedings. All was as illegal as the events at the Tuileries had been. They had no shadow of a title to be considered as the members of a duly constituted government, and were they challenged to produce such they must lamentably acknowledge they had none, beyond the right of an onlooker to interfere in a street brawl; and they must be prepared to accept the natural consequences of their rash act.[1] All was uncertainty. As far as Lamartine and his colleagues knew, the King might be collecting his troops at Saint-Cloud, preparatory to swooping down upon the rebel city and wreaking dire vengeance on those who usurped his constitutional prerogatives. Even now loyal regiments might be surrounding the Duchess of Orleans, determined to uphold the sacred rights of her son. Drunk with triumph, maddened by the sight of the blood which reddened the streets, the mob pressed on, taking little heed of what might occur on the morrow, but determined to have its hero proclaim the Republic, to-day, from the steps of the People's Palace, the Hôtel de Ville, the rallying place of the revolutionary hordes from all quarters of Paris. As the heterogeneous cortège surrounding Lamartine and the octogenarian, Dupont de l'Eure, made its way along the left bank of the Seine, regiments of the line could be discerned marching on the opposite bank.[1] A moment later they passed the barracks of the dragoons on the quai d'Orsay. These troops, still supposedly loyal to the monarchy, on witnessing the arrival of the noisy procession, hastily closed the iron gates and sounded the call to arms. Without a moment's hesitation, Lamartine, who realized the peril of the situation and the massacre which would ensue should the order to fire be given, approached the railings and, feigning thirst, begged for a glass of wine. Holding the cup high above his head, and smiling to soldiers and mob alike, he cried: "Friends, here is our banquet! Let the people and the soldiers fraternize with me." The felicitous phrase, with its reference to the primary object of the forbidden banquet, was received with thundering applause. "Long live Lamartine!" "Vive le gouvernement provisoire!" shouted troopers and manifestants together, as hands grasped hands through the iron railings. This was the first of the happy phrases which Lamartine was to find so often during the next weeks, and which in every instance turned aside the anger and resentment he was forced to face.

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[1] Cf. Lamartine, *Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 224, who fully realized the anomaly of his position.

The progress of the procession was hampered by the barricades which bristled at frequent intervals, around which lay the corpses of men and horses and the miscellaneous débris of the street-fighting which had taken place during the morning. At the entrance to the Place de Grève, opposite the Hôtel de Ville, a perfect sea of human beings blocked the way. As yet the news of the formation of a Provisional Government at the Palais Bourbon had not reached this quarter. Besides, the Hôtel de Ville was supposed to be in the hands of agitators who were even then occupied in squabbling for leadership. The cries of "Make place for the Government!" made but little impression on the compact multitude, which was, in fact, rather inclined to be hostile to those assuming an authority *they* had not bestowed. The names of Dupont de l'Eure and of Arago saved the situation, the former especially being well known and venerated by all classes of society. The position of the members of the new Government proclaimed in the Chamber was, indeed, critical. From every window, from every balcony, from the roofs of surrounding buildings, demagogues and political orators of every shade of opinion, delegates from the secret societies, socialists and anarchists, were haranguing the crowds, and scattering lists of governments they desired to form. Yet in all the Babel of political mouthings, one word was universally echoed to the sky: "The Republic!" There could be no question of doubt as to the form of government desired by the vast multitude seething in the square and through the passages and halls of the Hôtel de Ville. But the Moderates and the Reds were at loggerheads; the dread of seeing the fruits of the revolution snatched from them, as in 1830, and a restoration of the monarchy substituted for the Republic they had fought for, caused a mutual mistrust, which might at any moment provoke internecine strife of the most blood-curdling nature. As Lamartine and the venerable Dupont slowly elbowed their way among the menacing ruffians they designed to govern, the repeated discharge of firearms and the clanging of the tocsin-bells gave evidence of the difficulties of the task they had assumed.

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[1] Daniel Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 238.

But all this bedlam was as nothing compared to the wild confusion reigning within the spacious courtyard and intricate corridors of the City Hall. Frantic with joy over their recent triumph, the lowest scum of the Parisian faubourgs awoke the echoes of the vaulted passages with musket and pistol, to which din was added the stamping and neighing of the panic-stricken and abandoned mounts of Municipal Guards, the groans of the dying and the shrieks of the wounded who writhed untended upon the blood-stained flagging. Within the building, as outside on the square, popular demagogues, even liberated jail-birds, were spouting socialistic, or rank communistic, doctrines, inciting the mob to violence and pillage. How should such as these be brought to a comprehension of the sober and orderly government it was sought to establish? To these liberty and licence were synonymous, and the strong arm of the law or of military might could alone be relied upon to bring them into subjection. But neither law nor the means of enforcing it now existed; nor was the warrant held by this little band of would-be peacemakers recognized by the demented populace. Within the Hôtel de Ville all sought to rule, but none were willing to be governed. Mingled with the communists who sought only a second Reign of Terror were emissaries of the Bonapartists, while farther on the friends of Lamennais urged his claims as member of the Government.[1] It was with this scene of pandemonium that Lamartine, separated from his colleagues, finally found himself confronted, as the surging torrent of humanity bore him onward and upward. Wandering blindly from room to room, himself haranguing the excited groups, exhorting them to calm and moderation, Lamartine at length found himself again in the presence of Dupont de l'Eure and the principal members of the

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[1] Cf. Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 242.

Government proclaimed in the Chamber. The room was crowded to suffocation, but all attempts to clear it and permit of any private deliberation between the members of the Provisional Executive failed utterly; merely served, in fact, to excite the suspicions of the mob, which discerned in the desire a plan to defraud the people of its claim to free and open discussion. The patriarch, Dupont de l'Eure, being called upon to proclaim the names of those elected by popular acclamation to replace temporarily the fallen Government, fainted when attempting to address those present.[1]

Collective deliberation between the men charged with the preservation of order was impossible. In despair they saw the precious minutes slipping by, and trembled at the horrors of the night in the defenceless city, deprived of any directing power, with "three hundred thousand armed men, maddened by the smell of powder,"[2] quarrelling amongst themselves and at war with organized society. Yet not so much as a sheet of paper or writing materials could be procured in order to throw from the windows to the throng below some sign of authority, some earnest that a government was in fact organized and working for the public weal. Fortunately, an employee of the Prefecture, M. Flottard, came to the rescue, whispering in Lamartine's ear that a small office in the rear was still uninvaded by the crowd and that he had the key in his pocket. There the hunted Government found comparative peace and quiet, and instantly set about the composition of a manifesto. Around the small table in the narrow room sat Dupont de l'Eure, who presided; at his elbow Lamartine, to whom was confided the drafting of the proclamation to the people. Then came Arago, Ledru-Rollin, Crémieux, Marie, and Garnier-

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[1] Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 248.

[2] Lamartine, *Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 231.

Pagès. The names of the two last had not, it is true, been uncontested at the moment of the hasty constitution of the Provisional Government in the Chamber, and some objection was made to admitting them now. But Lamartine urged the futility of discussing the validity of the warrants they held at this critical moment, and convinced his hearers that seven heads would be better than five for the work they had before them.

Without further loss of time, he dashed off a manifesto to the "People of France," informing them that "a retrograde and oligarchical Government had been overturned by the heroism of the people of Paris; that this Government had fled, leaving behind it a trail of blood which forever forbade its return." He continued that "a Provisional Government" was temporarily instituted "to organize and assure the national victory"; and called upon the country to uphold their authority until such time as a free and untrammelled electorate should decide upon the definite Government.[1] Although not strictly true that the Government they represented was the result of "the votes of the deputies from the various departments of France," this original draft was unhesitatingly accepted by his colleagues and despatched to the National Printing Office. It will be noticed that Lamartine also affirms that the Government *proclaims* the Republic. Hardly had the manifesto been given to the printers, however, when a long and violent discussion was engaged in by Pagnerre and Bixio, who had penetrated into the council-room, and who strenuously denounced the proclamation of the Republic as a usurpation of the rights of the Nation; a violation of the national sovereignty, which had had no deliberative voice in the form of government. The force of this argument being recognized, messengers were despatched to bring back the original draft.

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[1] Cf. Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

The discussion of the new wording had but just begun, when Louis Blanc, accompanied by Albert,[1] a journeyman mechanic of considerable political influence, entered. On the original list proposed in the offices of the "Réforme," Blanc's name had figured prominently; but Lamartine had deliberately eliminated the name from the lists proclaimed at the Palais Bourbon.[2] Strong in his popularity with the masses, Louis Blanc insisted on his right to take part in the deliberations of the Government, and when denied, on the ground that his name had not been mentioned during the session, he threatened to appeal to the people for justice.[3] The risk of thus stirring up discussion in the seething thousands who were clamouring for the Republic beneath the very windows of the council chamber induced the Government to hesitate; and after considerable debate, Louis Blanc and Albert were inscribed as secretaries. Lamartine in his "Mémoires" omits this incident, merely mentioning that, after having distributed the various departments of the Government, secretaries were appointed in order to attach all the live forces of popularity which might have caused rivalry had they been excluded; adding that Louis Blanc was too closely allied to the socialists to be omitted with impunity from a popular government.[4]

Although at first the secretaries had consultative powers only, almost immediately they were granted deliberative rights in council. In the distribution of portfolios which followed, Lamartine was unanimously accorded the direction of Foreign Affairs, a position his diplomatic experience well qualified him to fill. Moreover, the patriarch, Dupont de l'Eure, realizing that his advanced age precluded all possibility of incessant labour on his part, spontaneously named Lamartine as his substitute in the presidential chair. To Arago was entrusted the Navy; Crémieux "insinuated" himself into the Ministry of Justice; while Ledru-Rollin, without waiting to be selected, "insisted upon taking charge of" the Home Office.[1] M. Marie was given the Public Works, while Garnier-Pagès took over the important position of Prefect of Paris. Strangely enough, the Provisional Government did not hesitate to confide to outsiders such a capital post as that of Minister of War, which, after having been refused by Generals Lamoricière and Bedeau, was eventually accepted by one of Napoleon's soldiers, General Subervie, a man far beyond his prime, and without special aptitude for the difficult rôle. He was Lamartine's choice, and although he was not a success, his backer believed that, had he been retained in office, the Government would have been better served.[2] Lamartine, although nominally in a subordinate position, was *de facto* head of the Government which now attempted the administration of the seething city and of France. To Lord Normanby he confided that he had declined the nominal Presidency of the Government through fear of exciting jealousies, and to the same diplomat he related that, as he passed down the Boulevards, he had been followed by a huge crowd shouting, "Vive Lamartine, premier Consul!" Turning round, he cried: "I want nothing for myself; but what you seem to want for me is that I be shot to-night."[3]

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[1] His real name was Martin. Cf. Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 252; also Victor Pierre, *Histoire de la république de 1848*, vol. I, p. 53.

[2] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

[3] Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 252; cf. also, Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 164, and Louis Blanc, *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. I, p. 74.

[4] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 237.

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[1] Cf. Élias Regnault, *Histoire du gouvernement provisoire*, p. 72. M. Regnault was chief secretary in the Ministry of the Interior. His history is not wholly impartial, but valuable to the student.

[2] Cf. Lamartine, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 236.

[3] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 137; cf. also Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 118, who cites a conspiracy of Conservative Republicans to give the Presidency to Lamartine.

By this time the news had been spread that the Provisional Government was in session at the Hôtel de Ville, and the mayors of the various arrondissements began to make offers of service; followed in turn by deputies, military officers, members of the National Guard, politicians, and hosts of citizens, who had only the safety or order of the city at heart.

Meanwhile, the original manifesto of the Provisional Government had been returned, and, after heated discussion, the phrase which had met with disapproval was corrected to read that the Government "*desired the Republic* subject to the ratification by the people, which would be immediately consulted."[1] Hastily struck off on the national presses, this proclamation, followed by another addressed to the generals, officers, and soldiers, was thrown in thousands from the windows and balconies of the Hôtel de Ville, and distributed by messengers throughout the city.

A beginning had been made; yet no illusions existed as to the well-nigh insuperable difficulties which bristled in the path this heterogeneous, ill-established, and unauthoritative Government must tread. The very heart of the ill-assorted Executive was divided. Little sympathy, often open antagonism, existed between its members, and opposing currents were discernible: from the outset on one side Marrast, Arago, Marie, and Garnier-Pagès, the moderates, men who had been drawn almost against their will into the vortex of the revolutionary whirlpool they would fain have avoided; on the other, Ledru-Rollin, Flocon, Louis Blanc, and his satellite, Albert, Republicans, practically socialists, of the most advanced types, eager to compromise their less revolutionary colleagues in the eyes of the populace. Between the two extremes Crémieux floated uncertainly, now with, now against, his colleagues. As for Lamartine, he stood apart, fascinated by the brilliant boldness of Ledru-Rollin, yet dreading the consequences of his reckless policy.[1] As a matter of fact, the two journals which had been so largely instrumental in forming the Provisional Government, the "National" and the "Réforme," in reality dictated its earlier policy; fortunately, with a commendable spirit of conciliation. Around the Hôtel de Ville the vast crowd still surged, beating upon the walls of the edifice like the waves of the sea, and threatening to submerge the sole vestige of power which struggled to pacify the angry tumult.

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[1] Lamartine, *Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 242.

As they sat in permanent session in that narrow upper chamber, the members of the Provisional Government received from hour to hour the most alarming reports. Specially appointed commissaries were despatched in all directions, carrying as sole credentials scraps of paper bearing the signature of some member well known to the people. To the Tuileries, menaced with flame and destruction, they sped, or to Versailles, from whence came the rumour that the mob had decided to devastate this relic of monarchical luxury; or to Neuilly, already half consumed by fire. Others again were sent in all haste to protect the railways, and urge the demolition of the hundreds of barricades, which interrupted all circulation in many of the thoroughfares and cut off the city from its base of supplies. For three days Paris had been practically isolated, and the scarcity of food was beginning to be seriously felt. This situation must be relieved at all costs, for famine meant the spread of the anarchy which was now only sporadic. To this end, consequently, the Executive set itself with redoubled fervour. Writing on the morning of the 26th, Lord Normanby pays a glowing tribute to the men who had undertaken this seemingly impossible task. "I really think," he notes, "that the exertions of the Provisional Government during the last four and twenty hours for the reëstablishment of order have been prodigious, such as, at any rate, show them to be men of capacity, likely to exercise influence in the country should they succeed in controlling the evil passions still afloat in a population, which finds itself in arms owing to the unaccountable submission and connivance of the troops."[1] But these evil passions were as yet far from being controlled. The "Reds" were becoming more and more unmanageable, ever more preposterous in their demands, ever more communistic in their exactions.

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[1] Cf. Regnault, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

One after another the members of the still only half-recognized Government were called from their stormy deliberations to argue and compromise with the angry hordes which had invaded the Hôtel de Ville, threatening life and property. Amongst the populace an ineradicable impression prevailed that, as in 1830, the prompt reëstablishment of order must mean the reëstablishment of the monarchical system. That these grave and respectable men, one at least of them an aristocrat by birth and training, were actually engaged in consolidating the popular form of government, seemed an anomaly, and as such a suspicious circumstance. The demand was made that the suspected tyrants weaving their nefarious schemes, wherein to enmesh the liberties won on the barricades, should be forced to deliberate only in the presence of trusted delegates named by the people. Strange to say, it was the mistrusted "aristocrat," Lamartine, who exercised the greatest influence over the raging mob clamouring for the licence he refused to grant. The music of his voice, his dignified bearing, perhaps the distinction of his tall, spare figure, incarnating that very aristocracy they reviled, were all attributes which went to make up the irresistible charm of his personality, and added to the magnetism he exercised. "Lamartine now revealed himself an admirable popular orator," writes M. Quentin-Bauchart. Often received with yells of defiance, of scorn, and even death, he charmed the mob with his eloquence, and caused their fury to give way to enthusiasm, saving critical situations by felicitous phrases which caught the popular fancy or tickled its sense of humour.[1] During the first night of their assumption of office the Government was interrupted over and over again by the incursions of the infuriated mob, which threatened to pitch them from the windows and install in their places blood-stained demagogues.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 115.

Seven times Lamartine had laid aside his pen, and, followed by a few citizens, gone into the corridors, to the landings, down to the steps of the Hôtel de Ville, to urge the demented mob to await the result of the deliberations being carried on above. Each time, pushing aside the threatening swords and daggers, the bayonets and revolvers held close to his chest by the drunken wretches who thirsted for revenge, welcomed by a volley of oaths and imprecations, leaning from a window, clinging to a balustrade, or hoisted on a rickety stool, he quieted the clamour, forced applause, and even brought tears of enthusiasm to the eyes of his hearers. Incredible as these miracles seem, they are attested in the chronicles of a dozen eye-witnesses, themselves dumbfounded by the magic of his achievement. On this memorable night of February 24, Lamartine for the seventh time had been called to quell the ever-rising tide of revolt which beat against the very door of the council-chamber. His clothes torn and bedraggled, collarless, his face bathed in sweat and begrimed with smoke and dust, he staggered forth once more to face the howling mob which loudly accused him as a traitor. "Death to Lamartine!" shrieked the maddened fanatics. "Hang him on the nearest lamp-post!" "Don't listen to his specious cajoleries!" "His head! His head! Give us his head!" cried those nearest him, reaching out to seize their victim. Impassive despite the imminence of his peril, looking down from the steps upon the blood-thirsty ruffians, Lamartine calmly retorted: "My head, citizens! It is my head you want? Would to God you had it on your own shoulders at this moment! You would be more calm and wise, and the business of your revolution would be better done." Shouts of boisterous laughter followed upon this happy speech. The very hands that had sought to deal the death-blow were now extended in friendly grasp. Shaking off the men who still held him by the collar, and withering a young man who had twitted him with being nought but an harmonious windbag, unfit to lead the people, he went forth alone among the ten thousand armed men thronging the square, and aroused them to enthusiasm and renewed confidence in the honesty of purpose of the devoted citizens struggling for the maintenance of public liberties.

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[1] *Lamartine homme politique*, p. 169.

This was but one instance in a hundred of the fascination, the domination, he exercised over the uneducated minds of the rioters to whom political agitation was a mere pretext for plunder and bloodshed. The evening of the 24th, the whole of the 25th and 26th of February, together with the greater part of the night, were passed in this perpetual struggle of one man against the mob. "La plus grande gloire dans les premiers jours de la Révolution appartient incontestablement à M. Lamartine," wrote a functionary of the Provisional Government.[1] "C'est lui qui, sans autres auxiliaires que le courage et le génie de l'éloquence, a fait sortir l'ordre d'un épouvantable chaos. Seul contre des flots armés, il les apaise de la voix et du geste . . . renouvelant, heure par heure, tous les miracles d'Orphée." But M. Regnault tells us that Lamartine did not present himself humbly and as a supplicant, but proudly and imperiously, dominating by his voice the clash of arms, the roars of anger, and disarming with a glance those who sought his life with gun or hatchet; subjugating the bestial passions of the mob by the force of his incomparable eloquence alone.[1] It was the clash of moral courage against passion, of intellectual strength against brutal force. That his physical strength withstood the tremendous strain seems incomprehensible, especially when we recall that the effort was prolonged during three long months.

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[1] M. Élias Regnault, Chief of Cabinet of the Ministry of the Interior.

Although no two opinions could exist as to the magnificent results of his conduct when facing the seditious multitudes, Lamartine's actions within the council-chamber were variously interpreted. "M. Lamartine, dans les luttes de la place publique, fut héroïque et sublime," asserts M. Regnault; "M. Lamartine, dans les luttes intérieures du gouvernement provisoire, fut faible et équivoque."[2] This criticism is not devoid of truth. The weakness we have so frequently had occasion to observe in the man became more noticeable in the statesman on whose shoulders lay the terrific responsibilities he had perhaps somewhat lightly assumed. Much as he loved to think himself so, Lamartine was not a man of action in the broadest sense of the term. His position in the Provisional Government was much the same as that he had occupied in the earlier years of his parliamentary career. He was the balance-wheel of conflicting party and popular interests: the diplomatist seeking to conciliate irreconcilable forces. Although this was undoubtedly the case in the majority of the incidents which arose during those troublous times, here and there we have striking proof that no pressure could break down his opposition where his principles or deep-rooted convictions were at stake.

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[1] *Histoire du gouvernement provisoire*, p. 130.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 132.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in his determined and unyielding refusal to accept the red flag which the socialists were equally determined to impose upon the Government and France. Besieged in the Hôtel de Ville, on February 25, by a threatening multitude insisting on the adoption of this banner as the symbol of their victory in the face of the world, the Government was divided as to the course it should pursue. Almost alone Lamartine energetically protested against an undignified and perilous concession to the basest popular instincts, which must inevitably discredit the Revolution in the eyes of the civilized world. The hour was, indeed, one of extremest peril. Beneath the windows a ragged crowd, barefooted, hungry, and mad with drink. To add to the fury of the populace, half-naked men, their torn shirts stained with blood, pushed their way through the mob, carrying corpses from the outlying districts, which they laid in the corridors of the Hôtel de Ville, outside the council-chamber. "Les morts nous submergent," cried Dr. Samson to Lamartine, as he faced this ghastly display of the "people's dead," to which were added the carcases of horses, dragged in from the streets. Amidst these scenes of carnage, his ears ringing with the wild shrieks of the frenzied multitude, clamouring for more blood and fresh victims, Lamartine, leaving his still-hesitating colleagues, descended alone to face the turmoil, undismayed by the rage and fury depicted in the sea of faces which glowered upwards. Mounted on a rickety straw-bottomed chair, he sketched in outline the glorious victories of this so rapid and complete revolution, flattering his hearers with frequent reference to the wise moderation they had shown in the hour of triumph, and urging them not to give rise to a misinterpretation of their aims and objects by seeming to desire the substitution of a revolution of vengeance and reprisals to a revolution "actuated by sentiments of fraternity and concord." "As for me," he unflinchingly shouted, "never will my hand sign this decree you seek. Until death overtakes me I will refuse to accept this banner of blood. And you ought to repudiate it just as emphatically as I do," he added, "for this red flag which you bring to us has only made the rounds of the Champ-de-Mars, dragged in the blood of the people in '91 and in '93, while the tricolour flag of France has been round the world, inscribed with the name of our country, our glory, and liberty."[1]

Here no middle course was possible; nor did Lamartine seek one: his attitude in face of a terrible danger — not only a personal danger, but a peril involving the existence of the political régime he represented — was inflexible. He would move neither to the right nor to the left: at the cost of life itself there must be no compromise with the mob on this vital issue. Not once, but again and again, as one frenzied mob gave place to another, brandishing their weapons in his face, he reiterated his determination to fall where he stood rather than be a party to this truckling to the baser instincts of the populace. As group succeeded group, pressing up to hear his words, he explained, as he noted the increasing calm, the necessity of allowing the Government time to establish on a firm basis, at home and abroad, the Republic purchased at the cost of the people's blood. "I spoke to you as a citizen just now," he told them; "now listen to me in my quality as your Minister for Foreign Affairs.

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 373.

If you take from me the tricolour flag, remember that you deprive France of half her strength abroad! For Europe recognizes only the flag which has waved over her defeats and your victories: the flag of the Republic and of the Empire. Should Europe witness the adoption of the red banner, she would consider it but the symbol of a faction. It is the flag of France, the banner of our victorious armies, the symbol of our recent triumphs, which we must hoist in the face of Europe. France and the tricolour flag stand for the same ideals, the same prestige, the same warning, should necessity arise, to our enemies."[1] In his interesting "Souvenirs" M. C. de Freycinet, at that time a pupil at the "École polytechnique," and an aide-de-camp of Lamartine's, gives a somewhat different version of the orator's condemnation of the red flag. Substantially the scene is the same; but young De Freycinet, who stood at his chief's side, insists that Lamartine, when enumerating the glories of the tricolour and the ignominy of the crimson emblem, added: "Vous le repousserez tous avec moi."[2] To which the crowd gave grudging adherence.

Lamartine himself attributed his success in averting the peril of the red flag less to his personal eloquence than to the action of a wounded beggar, who, covering the speaker with his frail body, besought the Terrorists to hearken to their saviour, and remained at his side during the long ordeal.[3] This incident may or may not have taken place under the circumstances so lyrically described in the "Mémoires politiques"; the details are immaterial. But the fact remains, and is acknowledged by Lamartine's most persistent detractors, that his dauntless physical courage was displayed a hundred times during this perilous period. Nor is it fair to probe too deeply the psychological promptings which actuated the author of the "Histoire des Girondins" at this crisis, as some critics have shown a disposition to do.[1] There was no play-acting here: no recital of lines borrowed from the heroes of the drama he had so lyrically transmogrified in the "Girondins." It was the level-headed statesman giving utterance to sound common sense who saved the Republic in this hour of peril; but it is the poet who describes the incident, alleging that Lamartine owed his life, and France her flag, to the blood-stained beggar clinging to the knees of the orator as he faced the Terrorists on February 25, 1848. Perhaps Louis Blanc also deserves a share in the successful issue. Mounted on a table, not far distant from Lamartine, this trusted champion of the people proclaimed over and over again, "Le gouvernement provisoire veut la République"; and the people responded enthusiastically to the announcement.[2] Perhaps again the enormous sheet displayed by a band of workmen from a window of the Hôtel de Ville had contributed to pacify the excited multitude; for on that sheet was traced in charcoal letters, "La République une et indivisible est proclamée en France."[3] But, be all this as it may, few will question the heroism of the part played by Lamartine, not only on the public square, but in the heart of the Government, where Louis Blanc favoured the adoption of the sanguinary banner.[4]

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 380.

[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 24. M. de Freycinet has recently (1915), in conversation with the author, confirmed the accuracy of his version.

[3] *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 376.

Opinions may differ as to the importance of Lamartine's victory over the extremist elements hidden in the bosom of the Government or frankly proclaimed by the mob; but in the stolid world of the bourgeoisie nothing could have inspired greater confidence than his courageous action. As Sainte-Beuve noted at the time: "The very people who yesterday, on account of his 'Girondins' and his speeches at Mâcon, were ready to stone Lamartine, to-day raise altars in his honour. But on such altars should be inscribed: 'Élevé par la Reconnaissance et par la Peur.'" If Sainte-Beuve, as has been said, detected the Lamartine of the barricades in the Mirabeau and Vergniaud of the "Girondins," others, going still farther back, now sought to discern, in his speech on his reception in the French Academy (April, 1829), the Lamartine of the Provisional Government.[1]

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[1] Deschanel, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 226; *contra*, Doumic, *op. cit.*, p. 98; Dr. Véron, *Mémoires d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, vol. IV, p. 317.

[2] Cf. Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

[3] Blanc, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 83.

[4] Cf. Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 296; also Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

Far-fetched as such hypotheses may be in detail, they go to substantiate the claim that Lamartine was thoroughly consistent in the line of policies he pursued from the threshold of his entrance into public life.

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[1] *Portraits contemporains*, vol. 1, p. 376. Saint-Priest, cited by Sainte-Beuve, *op. cit.*, p. 379; cf. also De Tocqueville, speech of January 27, 1848.

CHAPTER XLII

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Writing on February 27, Lord Normanby asserts that the ascendancy of Lamartine was then confirmed, and pays a glowing tribute to his victorious action when rejecting the red flag. Referring to the general conduct of affairs by the men constituting the Government, the English Ambassador adds: "Making allowance for the difficulties of their position, I think many of the ordinances published by the Government during these last eight-and-forty hours do great credit to their political capacities."[1] Moreover, the diplomat expresses the belief that any National Assembly elected at that moment would confirm Lamartine at the head of affairs; and that, should such a course be adopted, its effect must be beneficial to France.

Next day (February 28) Lord Normanby wrote: "This morning at eight o'clock I received my first communication from home since the revolution, and between nine and ten made an unofficial visit to M. de Lamartine at his private residence. I explained to M. de Lamartine that my functions as ambassador having ceased with the abdication of the King to whom I was accredited, I could not present myself to him in that character, nor could I in any respect commit my Government for the future by anything I might then say; but that I could not help taking the earliest opportunity, when I could hope to find him disengaged, of assuring him I felt convinced Her Majesty's Government must, with myself, appreciate the immense services he had rendered to his country, to the cause of order, and the interests of civilization within the last few days. That this was to be understood as only giving my individual opinion, but that I knew that our rule always was to recognize any form of government which seemed to promise permanency, which maintained security within, and gave no wanton cause of offence to its neighbours. The personal intimacy which had once subsisted between M. de Lamartine and myself induced him to receive this opening on my part with the utmost cordiality, and he placed me at once on the terms of the most unmeasured confidence, and stated he would have no secret of any kind from me; that his first desire was to complete development of the English alliance, that all his efforts should be directed to that object, and that in doing so he felt assured he was promoting the only true interests of France."[1]

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[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 128.

After outlining with some care the foreign policy which the Government desired to follow, Lamartine allowed himself to be drawn out concerning recent events. "His description of the first sixty hours after the departure from the Chamber of Deputies revealed a state of things, I believe, unparalleled in any former history," continues Normanby. "M. Dupont de l'Eure, who had assisted at the scenes of the Convention, said that they had overcome greater dangers and difficulties in that short space of time than had marked its whole duration (September 20, 1792 to October 26, 1795); for during those sixty hours they were in the presence of an infuriated rabble, half drunk, and almost all armed. Nearly sixty thousand people filled the Place de Grève and its environs, in whose hands were twelve thousand muskets that had been taken from Vincennes before the Commissary had arrived there to save them. I saw on M. Lamartine's cheek the scratch which a bayonet had left when he had first proposed the abolition of the punishment of death in political cases, and had added: 'Why, if Louis-Philippe were here, no one would harm the poor old man.' This excited their fury, and swords and bayonets were pointed against his person. He said, 'Yes, begin with me if you must have a victim. Butchers! do you think you represent France?' and, seizing a moment of hesitation on their part, he shamed them into calm in a few minutes, and within four-and-twenty hours afterwards he had obtained the abolition of the punishment of death for political offences with general assent. I do not suppose in the history of the world that there ever was such an instance of the triumph of a courageous mind inspired by noble sentiments over the brute force of the masses."[1]

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[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 132.

Surely no more magnificent tribute could be paid: nor can its sincerity be doubted, for, although Lamartine had every reason to propitiate the ambassador of a great nation whose moral support he desired, Lord Normanby could only be actuated by sentiments of personal admiration. The importance Lamartine attached to a speedy recognition by England was manifest in his closing remarks. When Lord Normanby took leave, saying that he would not keep him longer from his affairs, Lamartine replied, with emphasis: "Mon affaire c'est vous: all now depends upon you. If England speedily puts in a shape which can be made public what you have expressed to me personally to-day, we are all saved here, and the foundation of the most lasting and sincere alliance is established between two great nations who ought always to be friends."

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[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 135. In his *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, Louis Blanc draws attention to many inaccuracies in Lord Normanby's book. But the value of his criticism is greatly impaired by the very apparent personal hostility he entertains towards the British Ambassador, whom he accuses of wilful prevarication and of inconceivable ignorance concerning events taking place under his eyes. Cf. Preface, p. ii and iii; also pp. 52, 53, 71, *passim.*

Lamartine personified the transition from monarchical to republican principles; and to a degree incomprehensible to-day, it was to him the nations of Europe looked for the new interpretation of the diplomacy of the Holy Alliance the victorious revolutionary party would surely insist upon. The year 1848 marks a critical date in the political and diplomatic history of the nineteenth century. In Naples and in Rome the torch had been lighted, but nowhere could the movement acquire the significance it had in France, where the Bourbons had been sponsors for the observance of the treaties of 1815. The reaction against those diplomatic obligations had been discernible in France for several years past, and we have seen that Lamartine considered them not only hampering but humiliating, and, on occasion, had not hesitated to urge the Ministry in power to shake off the fetters the conquerors of Napoleon had imposed. It was only natural to suppose that, as the head and guide of the diplomacy of the new order, Lamartine would lose no time in declaring null and void these hated restrictions to the development of France's international policies; possibly at the price of war. On the other hand, in view of the precarious position of the Provisional Government, and the imminence of the peril which must inevitably follow on a successful anarchical uprising in France, was it not the bounden duty of the Holy Alliance to take steps to smother the flames before they reached across the frontier? To Lamartine, and to the more cautious members of the Provisional Government, the perils of the situation at home appeared hardly more menacing than that of a foreign invasion.

If the Revolution of 1830 had, on the one hand, awakened democracy throughout the whole of Europe, it had, on the other hand, caused the occupants of the various thrones to draw closer the bonds of mutual protection against the inroads of liberalism. But the eighteen years of constitutional régime, unsatisfactory as they had been in many respects, had fired those condemned to endure the despotism of many of the petty Italian and German sovereigns with the desire to emulate, if not surpass, the political franchises enjoyed in France. The failure of Louis-Philippe's Government to fulfil the pledges given, and the ease with which the people of Paris had deposed their sovereign and set up a government modelled on political theories of the most advanced type, could but incite to rebellion the malcontents across the Rhine and south of the Alps. Latent discontents were suddenly roused to action. Within a week Milan was up in arms against the Austrian oppressor, and in due course the conflagration spread over the Peninsula and across Central Europe. The popular outburst and the event which had caused it were so unexpected that the absolutists were, as a matter of fact, unprepared for the shock. But this could not be foreseen by the struggling Provisional Government in France, and the grave apprehensions of those responsible for the guidance of the foreign policy of the new régime might be reasonably supposed to be well founded. Consequently, it behooved Lamartine to act at once with caution and firmness: with caution, because the triumph of the democratic principle in France must inevitably arouse the jealous susceptibilities of still powerful monarchical neighbours; with firmness, because these neighbours must be made to realize that France would brook no foreign interference with the institutions she had adopted. The logic of this attitude was war; but Lamartine and his colleagues desired to avert such a contingency; at least, until the country had been consulted and the national sanction had been given, in legal form, to the Republic which the people of Paris had proclaimed.

The task which lay before Lamartine was an arduous one. As Minister for Foreign Affairs he had to speak to monarchical Europe in the name of republican France. It must be his endeavour to conciliate restless populations looking expectantly to the victorious democracy of France, and sovereigns still having it in their power to hamper the development of the liberties Frenchmen had conquered with their blood. In other words, Lamartine's was the impossible task of conciliating two irreconcilable principles. In the circumstances a middle course alone was open to him: to allay the impatience of an eager foreign democracy and to reassure their rulers as to the pacific intentions of France. To this end he brought to bear all the artifices of his persuasive eloquence, and on March 4, the "Moniteur" printed a circular letter addressed to the embassies and legations of France throughout the world, which is, perhaps, unparalleled in the annals of diplomatic history.

On February 27, notifying the foreign diplomatists accredited to the late French Court of his accession to office, Lamartine had outlined the tenor of the "Manifesto" when he wrote: "The Republican form of the new Government has changed neither the position occupied by France in Europe, nor her loyal and sincere disposition to preserve her harmonious relations with the Powers which, with her, desire national independence and universal peace. It will be a pleasure to me to contribute by all the means in my power to this cordial pact of reciprocal dignity, and to make clear to Europe that the principles of peace and liberty were born the same day in France."[1] Developing in his "Manifesto"[2] this spirit which animates the new Republic, Lamartine gives utterance to a somewhat startling commingling of defiant and conciliatory sentiments. "France is a Republic," he states. "The French Republic does not need recognition abroad in order to exist." Founded on natural and national rights, the Republic is the expression of the will of a great people who seek no other title than that which they themselves confer. Nevertheless, the French Republic being desirous of entering the family of constituted governments as a regular power, and not as a disturbing phenomenon of European peace, Lamartine instructs diplomatic agents abroad to make known promptly to the courts to which they are accredited the principles and tendencies which will henceforth guide the foreign policy of the French Government. "The proclamation of the French Republic," he insists, "constitutes an aggressive act against no form of government in the world." All other forms are the expressions of the degree of maturity of the genius of a people. The monarchical and the republican principles are not, in the eyes of real statesmen, diametrically antagonistic: they are contrasting facts capable of existing one in the face of the other, understanding and respecting each other. War, which became a fatal and glorious necessity in 1792, was not a principle with the present Republic. The revolution of yesterday was a step in advance, not a step backwards; and its aim was brotherhood and peace. Then follows an analysis of the psychological and philosophic conditions which prevailed in France in 1792; the deduction being that at that period "liberty was a novelty, equality a scandal, the Republic a problem." To-day both thrones and peoples are accustomed to liberties and social franchises which were then but little understood. It will soon be recognized, he asserts, that there is such a thing as conservative liberty, and that a Republic offers greater scope for the government of all by all than does a government by the few for the few. Nevertheless, Lamartine especially cautions his agents that, although the ideas he sets forth may be offered as guarantees of peace, they must in no sense be construed as an apology on the part of the Republic for the audacity of its birth; much less as humbly begging a place in the family of European nations. The explanations he has given have a more noble object: to cause the sovereigns and peoples to reflect; to avoid an involuntary misrepresentation of the character of the late revolution; in fine, to reassure the world as to the humanitarianism of the movement while at the same time warning all men that France is prepared to uphold her rights. France will make war on none, he again maintains, but the aim of the men who at this moment govern France is the following: "France will gladly accept the challenge should war be declared upon her, and she be thus constrained, in spite of her moderation, to add to her strength and glory! But the responsibility of the Republic would be terrible should she, without provocation, herself declare war."

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 175.

[2] March 5, 1848.

In the eyes of the Holy Alliance the most startling assertion Lamartine made was unquestionably the pragmatic repudiation of the treaties of 1815: the rest might be accepted as a more or less platonic theorem, or the generalizations of a social and political philosophy, the practical enactment of which was doubtful. Although couched in diplomatic and conciliatory language, there could be no mistake as to the determination of France to throw off the fetters which had hampered her foreign policy since the downfall of the conqueror who had set his heel on Europe. "Les traités de 1815 n'existent plus en droit aux yeux de la République française," Lamartine insists; "toutefois, les circonscriptions territoriales de ces traités sont un fait qu'elle admet comme base et comme point de départ dans ses rapports avec les autres nations." "Make it clear," he instructs his agents; "and have it honestly accepted, that the Republic insists on emancipation from the treaties of 1815; and seek to demonstrate that this frankness is not irreconcilable with the peace of Europe."

As has been seen, this desire to abrogate the treaties of 1815 had long been evident in parliamentary debates, and Lamartine himself had not infrequently drawn attention to the continued humiliation their existence imposed on France. That he should seize this unique opportunity to repudiate these hateful obligations is only natural. But he went a long step farther when he menaced Europe with "the reconstruction of some oppressed nationalities in Europe and elsewhere," and warned the sovereigns of the Holy Alliance that the French Republic would feel constrained to take up arms should any interference be attempted with the democratic institutions of Switzerland, or the right be contested of the independent states of Italy to join forces for the consolidation of an Italian Nation. It became clear that while the Republic would not wantonly attack monarchical institutions abroad, the trend of her policy would be to proselytize by the light of example, "by the spectacle of order and peace she hoped to give the world."

Referring to the recent peril of war with England over the Spanish marriages, Lamartine, in the name of the Republic, unhesitatingly repudiates this "purely domestic policy" of the deposed dynasty, thus seeking to propitiate public opinion in England and pave the way to the alliance most essential in the present issue.[1]

"Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité," were the watchwords of the Republic, he asserted in conclusion. "Le sens de ces trois mots appliqués à nos relations extérieures est celui-ci: affranchissement de la France des chaînes qui pesaient sur son principe et sur sa dignité; récupération du rang qu'elle doit occuper au niveau des grandes puissances européennes; enfin, déclaration d'alliance et d'amitié à tous les peuples. Si la France a la conscience de sa part de mission libérale et civilisatrice dans le siècle, il n'y a pas un de ces mots qui signifie 'guerre.' Si l'Europe est prudente et juste, il n'y a pas un de ces mots qui ne signifie 'paix.'"[1]

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[1] Cf. also Evelyn Ashley, *Life of Lord Palmerston*, vol. 1, p. 68.

Opinions must necessarily differ as to the political morality of the "Manifeste à l'Europe." "Il disait ce qu'on voulait, cet élégant manifeste," is the opinion of an eminent compatriot, M. de Mazade.[2] To France he offered the theoretic abrogation of the treaties of 1815, and to Europe he guaranteed the respect of territorial circumscriptions fixed by these same treaties. For those who read between the lines it meant peace, a peace without any sign of weakness, and as such Europe was forced to accept it.

Lord Normanby's declaration, that the document partook more of the character of a report of a speech than of the calmness of a state paper, is pertinent. And he adds: "So many absurd expectations have already been inevitably checked, that it may be necessary the public impatience should be fed by high-sounding phrases. Yet, whilst I am still in great admiration of his many rare qualifications for the position he holds, I own I should have had a more perfect confidence in his successfully combating the complicated difficulties by which he is surrounded, if, in the affair of the Manifesto, he had shown a more correct judgment. No doubt there are many noble sentiments and much brilliancy of expression, but the previous short circular seemed to me perfect in its tone and all that could have been required of a Provisional Government."[1]

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[1] On the publication of the "Manifesto" deputations from various Masonic lodges went to the Hôtel de Ville to congratulate the author on the inclusion of the words, "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité." To these Lamartine replied that although the peculiar language they spoke was unknown to him, as he was not a Freemason, yet he knew enough of Masonry to be convinced that to the lodges they owed the "sublime explosion" of 1790, of which the people of Paris had just given a re-edition. Cf. *Trois mois de pouvoir*, p. 88; also Maurice Barrès, *L'Abdication du poète*, p. 17. In a personal letter to the author M. Jules Caplain, whose book on *Édouard Dubois* has been cited, insists that Dargaud frequently urged Lamartine to join the society.

[2] Cf. *Lamartine*, p. 168.

Lord Normanby was right: foreign governments would have been amply satisfied with the brief but explicit circular sent to the diplomatists in Paris on February 27. It was perhaps the necessity of satisfying French public opinion which impelled Lamartine to supplement his dignified notification with the verbose and declamatory "Manifeste à l'Europe."[2] And yet the composition of that document must assuredly have proved a most congenial task to him, for it embodied the theories he had advocated in his first public utterance, the "Politique rationnelle," and the principles he had upheld during the sixteen years of his parliamentary career. In his "Mémoires" Lamartine asserts that he submitted the draft of the "Manifesto" to the criticism of his colleagues, and a few eminent politicians holding republican opinions, who happened that day (March 6) to attend the deliberations of the council.[3]

Lord Normanby affirms that, on March 3, Lamartine discussed the circular with him, saying that "he should have wished to say nothing whatever about the treaties of 1815, but that this seemed impossible."[4] To this statement M. Louis Blanc takes violent exception. "I refuse to believe," he writes, "for the honour of M. de Lamartine, that the memory of Lord Normanby, on this occasion, was not faulty. How can one understand such an indiscretion? If M. de Lamartine really entertained the aversion Lord Normanby attributes to him, is it likely that he would have confided his secret feelings to a foreign diplomatist?"[1] It is probable that Lamartine felt legitimate apprehension as to how the European courts would view any definite statement concerning the new-born Republic's attitude towards this bone of contention. Yet we know that he had for years past sought some means of freeing France from the obligations the treaties entailed. There is no valid reason to doubt that a conversation took place on this subject between the Minister and the Ambassador; and this being the case, there could have been no diplomatic impropriety in Lamartine's expressing regret that so delicate a topic must perforce be touched upon in the manifesto he had in preparation. The question of war or peace had been discussed in council as early as March 2, and Lamartine had then presented a draft of his "Declaration" to the foreign Powers.[2] The "Mémoires" of Lamartine, Blanc, Garnier-Pagès and Daniel Stern are all in accord as to the insignificance of the changes made in the original draft prior to its insertion in the "Moniteur" on March 5. "L'approbation qu'il reçut, quant au fond, fut unanime," writes Stern. M. Louis Blanc alone insisted on the formal abrogation of the Vienna pacts.[3]

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[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 171.

[2] Cf. Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

[3] *Op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 32. Lamartine is in error as to date; the "Manifesto" was published March 5.

[4] *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 164. That Lamartine was convinced that the manifesto would strengthen his position and that of France appears certain in a letter to M. Rocher, written on March 5. "Les affaires étrangères n'étaient pas plus assurées après Austerlitz. Nous aurons un système français au lieu de l'isolement." *Correspondance*, DCCCCXXI.

After reading the "Manifesto," Lord Palmerston wrote to Lord Clarendon, on March 9: "Any Government which wished to pick a quarrel with France might find ample materials in this circular." Nevertheless, he recognized the elements which had necessitated this "piece of patchwork," and advises forbearance on the part of

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[1] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. I, p. 235.

[2] Garnier-Pagès, *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. III, p. 221.

[3] Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 48.

Europe. "I should say that if you were to put the whole of it into a crucible, and evaporate the gaseous parts, and scum off the dross, you would find the regulus (pure metal) to be peace and good-fellowship with other governments."[1] Lamartine himself solemnly asserts that he was decided to make the declaration of peace an absolute condition for his presence in the Government, and that the majority of his colleagues were at one on this point.[2] Yet none were blind as to the possible consequences of the "Manifesto," which might be construed as provocative, despite the protestations it contained of the Republic's *desire* for peace. The day after the publication of the "Manifesto" the Government assembled to consider the situation. As M. Garnier-Pagès pertinently observes: "Pour tenir un pareil langage, et en prévision d'une guerre probable avec la Russie et l'Autriche, la France devait avoir l'épée au côté." [3]

Generals Bedeau and Lamoricière were charged with a report on the state of the army: Lamartine asked that thirty thousand men should be immediately posted on the Italian frontier, ready to cross the Alps should the necessity arise. Furthermore, he demanded twenty thousand experienced troops from Africa for the protection of the Mediterranean coast; as well as fifteen thousand on the line of the Pyrenees, and one hundred and fifty thousand on the Rhine: a total of from two hundred and ten to two hundred and twenty thousand men in addition to the regular effective, which was nominally three hundred and eighty-two thousand strong, but in reality far less. "Lamartine awaited with anxiety the answer, which was one of life or death to his generous policy," writes Garnier-Pagès. Having offered Europe the choice of peace or war in the concluding paragraph of his "Manifesto," he must be prepared for the latter contingency should the Holy Alliance decide to enforce by arms the letter of the conventions of 1815. Fortunately, Lamartine had inspired the representatives of the Great Powers who remained at their posts in France with personal confidence. Fortunately also, they appreciated the difficulties of his position, and realized the sincerity of his professed desire for peace. Would his influence be strong enough to restrain the frankly revolutionary elements by which he was surrounded from committing breaches of international etiquette, making foreign intervention imperative? Therein lay the danger: a peril none foresaw more clearly than the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Government. All the tact, all the skill, and all the persuasive eloquence of the trained diplomatist were needed to steer between the rocks which threatened destruction to the ship of State at home and abroad. With this object in view, Lamartine sounded carefully Lord Normanby and the representatives of Prussia, Russia, Austria, Sardinia, Belgium, and the Papal Nuncio. Attaching special importance to the neutrality and possible friendly attitude of England, he opened indirect negotiations with the Duke of Wellington and received a reassuring reply.[1]

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[1] Ashley, *Life of Lord Palmerston*, vol. I, p. 86.

[2] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 32.

[3] *Op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 235.

Nor was the moral support of a country as far away as the United States neglected. On February 26, Mr. Rush, the American Minister, received a pressing invitation to present himself at the Hôtel de Ville for the purpose of encouraging and congratulating the Provisional Government. "The invitation was not official," writes Mr. Rush to the Secretary of State; "yet I had every reason to believe it authentic."[2] After some reflection and a consultation with Lord Normanby, Mr. Rush accepted the invitation, and on the 28th assured the members of the Provisional Government that, although owing to the great distance separating his country from France, it would be some time before he could receive instructions, yet he felt convinced that the people of the United States would be unanimous in their wishes of prosperity for the new Republic. On the conclusion of the Minister's address, M. Dupont de l'Eure advanced, and, cordially thanking the American diplomatist, exclaimed: "The People of France grasp the hand of the American Nation."

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[1] Cf. *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 31.

[2] Archives of the Department of State at Washington. Cf. also my "Lamartine et les États Unis," speech before the Académie de Mâcon de-

Although not in strict accordance with diplomatic usage, Mr. Rush's spontaneous recognition of the Provisional Government and the Republic they represented was unhesitatingly approved in Washington, and President Polk took the earliest opportunity to convey his congratulations to the people of France. The moral effect of Mr. Rush's act was considerable, it is true, yet the attitude of Governments nearer home, and especially that of England, was of more vital import for the preservation of the peace which Lamartine deemed essential. With this object in view the Minister for Foreign Affairs was constrained to replace the representatives of the dethroned régime by diplomatists fully in sympathy with the political ideals of republican France.

It has been seen that all through his parliamentary career Lamartine systematically reproached the diplomacy of Louis-Philippe with lack of firmness and a selfish

livered October 5, 1911, published in *Les Annales de l'Académie de Mâcon*, vol. XVI, p. 332. Cf. *Journal of a Year of Revolution*, vol. I, p. 130. Lord Normanby considered the step Mr. Rush proposed taking "unusual and premature" and likely to "induce a point of separation between himself and at least some of his colleagues. Mr. Rush listened very attentively to what I said," writes Lord Normanby, "admitted there was much reason in it, and added that he would consider it, but I am convinced he will still do as he announced, a course to which, in fact, he is probably already committed."

disregard of the higher interests of the Nation. The sycophancy of the "Bourgeois King's" intercourse with his brother sovereigns, and the subservience of national to dynastic considerations, had over and over again aroused his condemnation. The isolation of France since the advent of the July Monarchy was a constant source of irritation and humiliation. This ostracism was, of course, partly due to the revolutionary origin of the Government; nevertheless an energetic foreign policy could, Lamartine was convinced, reinstate France in the council of nations and give her the preponderance she had hitherto enjoyed. As lately as 1846 he had bitterly taunted Louis-Philippe with being "faible, à force d'être prudent."[1] It was now his turn to direct the foreign policy of France and to put his theories into practice. The difficulties of the situation in which he found himself were immeasurably greater than those which confronted the recognized constitutional monarchy of Louis-Philippe. The power he enjoyed, if power it can be called, was at best of but a transient nature: he was the representative of a Parisian political faction — not yet legally sanctioned outside the capital, and liable to destruction from hour to hour at the hands of the very populace which had given it birth. Nevertheless, it was an opportunity which must be seized, and Lamartine was determined that the uncertainty of his tenure of office should not deter him in his efforts to uplift the dignity of his country, which had been sacrificed by the pusillanimity of the preceding reign. At the same time, conscious of the ephemeral character of the mob-instituted Government, it behooved him to avoid compromising the future or hampering the freedom of action of his legally appointed successors. That this consideration constantly haunted him will become apparent when we read his justification of the

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[1] *Journal de Saône et Loire*, October 4, 1846.

Provisional Government's actions before the National Assembly, on May 23, 1848.

None felt more keenly than Lamartine the anomaly of the position he had been called upon to assume, not by the legitimate expression of the national will, but owing to purely fortuitous circumstances following upon a victorious Parisian revolution. Nevertheless, sectarian and doubtfully national as had been the origin of the social upheaval which had hoisted him to the precarious eminence on which he was to seek equilibrium during three long months, Lamartine felt that the honour and safety of France was largely in his hands, and that the preservation of both necessitated not only a prudent but a firm and active diplomacy abroad. His "Manifesto to Europe" left no illusions as to the course he was personally inclined to pursue, and from the tenets therein proclaimed none can accuse him of having departed by a hair's breadth, although the phraseology of certain utterances concerning oppressed nationalities might and did give rise later to misapprehensions and bitter denunciations. Yet, while passive in its essence, the diplomatic action which Lamartine inaugurated with his "Manifesto" became, by the mere force of events, distinctly active in fact, although never aggressive. Nor could this have been otherwise, since within a few weeks after the downfall of the July Monarchy in France half of Europe was seething in revolution.

On the other hand, Lamartine was essentially a man of action, who prior to the overthrow of the late Government had cherished and repeatedly professed a very distinct and energetic diplomatic policy for France. If the means of acquiring the position he sought for his country were changed, the end remained. Triumphant democracy must achieve what a discredited monarchical system had failed to carry out. He was himself the chosen instrument of that democracy. If his present position were ephemeral, Lamartine had at that moment every reason for the belief that a legally constituted National Government would confirm his official status, if, indeed, it did not insist on exalting it.[1] Following this line of reasoning it was natural for him to assume that the germs of the policies he inaugurated would speedily bear fruits which he himself might expect to lay in the lap of an internationally regenerated France.

First and foremost his efforts were directed towards the preservation and consolidation of the republican form of government, yet always with the ulterior object in view of recovering the diplomatic prestige and advantages the apathy of the late régime had eclipsed and forfeited. Popular sentiment exacted of the new order an energetic diplomacy which should shake off, with as little delay as was compatible with the most elementary prudence, the obnoxious fetters of 1815. Lamartine was himself thoroughly in accord with this popular sentiment[2] and needed no pressure from his colleagues when inserting in his "Manifesto" the determination of the Government on this subject. But his early diplomatic training now stood him in good stead, and he realized that for the achievement of the desired object something more than the popular sentiment of a successful, but as yet unorganized, revolutionary party was necessary. For many years past Lamartine had discerned that the road to release from the humiliating obligations lay in an energetic political action by France in the Orient. Nor was he alone in this belief. Polignac had adopted the principle, the Duc de Broglie, under Louis-Philippe, had entertained it, and later Napoleon III, in the Crimea, was to demonstrate the validity of the axiom.[1] Although the moment might hardly seem propitious for the enactment of so far-reaching a policy, Lamartine took advantage of the arrival of General Aupick, appointed Ambassador of the Republic at Constantinople, to assure the Sultan that he might "regarder comme siennes, l'armée, la flotte et la diplomatie de la France."[2] Exactly what the words might be taken to mean, Lamartine was (perhaps fortunately) never called upon to explain. The incident is significant, however, and serves to illustrate the complete reversion of the statesman's theories as to the division of the Ottoman Empire which he had professed at the beginning of his parliamentary career.[3]

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[1] The adhesion to the Provisional Government was, in truth, becoming more and more general. Between February 24 and March 3 nearly all the high functionaries, field marshals, generals, magistrates, clergy, and important leaders of parties, journalists of all colours, etc., welcomed the new régime and promised it their support. The Archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur Affre, was in the vanguard, and his lead was speedily followed by the Church dignitaries throughout France. Cf. Victor Pierre, *Histoire de la république de 1848*, vol. I, p. 83.

[2] Lord Normanby to the contrary notwithstanding. Cf. *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 165.

More momentous issues nearer home claimed the constant attention of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. In 1848 the question of diplomatic alliances, involving complicated international negotiations, was overshadowed by the daily and hourly conflict raging between the great social forces of democracy and the adherents to the régime which the Revolution had vanquished. The influence of French diplomacy could now only be calculated in direct ratio with the progress made by liberalism abroad. "L'état de l'opinion était tel," very justly writes M. Quentin-Bauchart, "que l'octroi d'une constitution ou l'établissement d'une République dans un pays étranger seraient considérés, tant à l'extérieur qu'à l'intérieur, comme une victoire remportée par elle."[4] Two courses lay open to Lamartine in the exercise of the diplomatic action within his actual grasp, the propaganda of the victorious democratic liberalism at the point of the sword, or the secret fermentation and encouragement by France of insurrectionary movements abroad. Both of these methods were condemned as disloyal and dangerous by Lamartine, who unswervingly urged the adoption of the "propagande de l'exemple," at least until such time as the election of a legally constituted and nationally representative Government should have relieved the Provisional Executive of the responsibilities it had assumed in the hour of social disorganization and peril. Convinced of the expediency as well as of the morality of this reasoning, Lamartine, in spite of the temptations offered, resolutely refused to allow himself to be drawn into entangling adventures in Italy, Belgium, or Germany, while persistently proclaiming his sympathy with the numberless deputations of "oppressed nationalities" which thronged the Hôtel de Ville, such as Poles and Irish, to say nothing of the disaffected factional revolutionary elements of every European nation.

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[1] Cf. Pierre Quentin-Bauchart, *Lamartine et la politique étrangère*, p. 68.

[2] Cf. Garnier-Pagès, *La révolution de 1848*, vol. VIII, p. 132.

[3] Cf. speeches of January 4 and 8, 1834, *La France parlementaire*, vol. I, p. 2; cf. also Lamartine, *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 147.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 69.

The "Manifeste à l'Europe" has been stigmatized as at bottom "betraying an equivocal and suspicious political creed." "On y sent à la fois et le poète humanitaire qui a écrit la 'Marseillaise de la paix,' et le diplomate qui a pris pour la circonstance des leçons de la Convention et du Directoire."[1] Given the circumstances under which it was composed and the amendments his colleagues in the Government insisted on inserting, the document assuredly did not adequately express the full measure of Lamartine's personal creed. Nevertheless, it embodied the fundamental political theories concerning foreign affairs by which he was willing to stand or fall, and no trace of "equivocal dealing" is discernible in the diplomatic negotiations to which he was a party when fulfilling the mandate he had assumed.

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[1] Victor Pierre, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 90.

The various Governments of Europe lost no time in accepting the precepts of the "Manifesto" as a basis for political intercourse with the new French Republic, and the diplomatic agents of all the countries represented at Paris received instructions to remain at their posts, and resume cordial, if as yet unofficial, contact with the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Laying aside for the nonce the scruples which harassed him, Lamartine set about organizing the personnel of the diplomacy on which he relied for the furtherance of the objects he had in view. Most of the men who had been in office under Louis-Philippe were manifestly inapt to serve the new régime, and no time was lost in recalling the chiefs of mission, although here and there secretaries were left in temporary charge until such time as they could be advantageously replaced.[1] The importance Lamartine attached to the friendship of Great Britain has been seen, and from the outset his relations with Lord Normanby had been most cordial. It was on account of the personal friendship he entertained with the Ambassador that he preferred to leave the post in London in the hands of a simple chargé d'affaires, believing that in view of the "cordialité sans réticence de leurs rapports" a French Ambassador in London was a "superfluity."[2]

From the outset Lamartine discerned in Belgium a firebrand capable of setting Europe aflame. The family ties which bound the ruling house with the late dynasty in France constituted a danger to the Republic which the more hot-headed politicians and agitators were anxious to remove by the annexation, pure and simple, of the Kingdom. Nor were there lacking in Brussels elements directly in sympathy with such an enterprise. But Lamartine realized the peril of such action, which meant inevitably war with England and the formation of a Continental coalition against the Republic. Fortunately for the peace of Europe, he was able to convince the Prince de Ligne, who had remained in Paris in his capacity of representative of the King of the Belgians, of his good faith, in spite of numerous provocations and the actual departure of a party of filibusters. The choice of a trained and prudent diplomatist to fill the delicate position created by revolutionary agents in Brussels was imperative, and the selection of M. Bellocq eventually saved a situation fraught with the gravest consequences. Lord Normanby notes in his "Journal" that the Prince de Ligne requested him to take charge of some valuable packages, as he expected an attack on the Legation by the Belgian democrats. Lamartine, to whom the Prince had applied for protection, replied: "What can I do for you? I have not four men that I could send to protect anything"; adding that he had but "la force morale de la parole." "This is an awkward state of things for the principal member of a Government to avow," remarks the Ambassador.[1] That Lamartine looked to the conclusion of an alliance with England as the basis of his diplomatic action there would appear to be no doubt. At the same time other political combinations seemed to him almost of equal import in counteracting the hostile influences of Northern Europe. We have his own authority for the statement that he meditated a triple alliance between republican France, constitutional Italy, and the Swiss Confederation, with this aim in view.[2] Switzerland, however, although recognizing among the first the new Republic, prudently held aloof from political engagements which might compromise the neutrality she enjoyed, while events in Italy, especially after Custozza (July 24–25), precluded the possibility of advantageous diplomatic action in Northern Italy.

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[1] Cf. Daniel Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 51.

[2] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 147; cf. also Daniel Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 49.

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[1] *Journal of a Year of Revolution*, vol. I, p. 237.

[2] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 143.

Early in March, 1848, however, the pivot on which hinged the political crisis in Continental Europe was the King of Prussia. "The axis of European war or peace, of the emancipation and reconstruction of Germany, of the pacific and partial regeneration of Poland, was at Berlin. The first word concerning the French Republic uttered by the King of Prussia must perforce express the opinion of the entire Continent. No one would dare say war, if he said peace."[1] Convinced as he was that the salvation of the newly founded Republic lay in the peaceful attitude of powerful neighbours, Lamartine's eagerness to enlist the sympathy of Frederick William IV is conceivable. For this purpose he confided this most important mission to Count Adolphe de Circourt, of whose discretion and personal devotion he was assured, in spite of the lukewarmness of his republicanism.[2] The instructions which this personal ambassador carried with him were in reality more philosophical than concrete, and De Circourt's influence was relied upon to obtain at the opportune moment certain moral rather than political advantages.

The letter accrediting M. de Circourt to Berlin is dated from Paris on March 6, 1848, but two important communications of the 4th and 5th respectively, written entirely in Lamartine's hand, contain the "secret instructions" with which the Minister for Foreign Affairs charged his envoy.[1] In substance De Circourt's mission was one of observation rather than of action. "Pour la mission d'humanité que je vous donne," wrote Lamartine, "vos instructions sont toutes dans votre caractère. Préserver l'Europe d'un incendie général, que la moindre étincelle de guerre pourrait allumer." To avert this peril M. de Circourt was to use every means at his disposal to reassure the King of Prussia as to the ambitions of France for territorial aggrandizement. Should the project be feasible, he was to lay the foundations for an alliance between the three great "essentially pacific Powers," Prussia, England, and France; which alliance should gradually be made to include Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, and the Italian States, and be the harbinger of an inter-nation confederation whose aim was peace.[2]

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 157.

[2] Cf. Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 51. Lamartine himself acknowledges that De Circourt was "plus près du légitimisme que de la démocratie" (cf. *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 158), and adds: "Sans être républicain de cœur," he was ready to welcome and serve the Republic (p. 159).

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[1] Cf. *Souvenirs d'une mission à Berlin*, edited by M. Georges Bourgin, vol. I, pp. 75–80.

[2] *Souvenirs d'une mission à Berlin*, vol. I, p. 79.

CHAPTER XLIII

DISSENSIONS IN THE GOVERNMENT

It was not until six days after the establishment of the Provisional Government that Lamartine was able to leave the Hôtel de Ville, and take possession of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, then on the Boulevard des Capucines.[1] Although the building had been invaded by the revolutionary hordes, the archives, and in fact the entire contents of the house, had been left untouched, and the personnel, protected by a detachment of National Guards, still occupied the premises. M. Bastide, a republican of the "National," was appointed under-secretary, and as chief of his private staff Lamartine took a young man named Payer, who, although hitherto unknown to him, had hardly left his side since the evening of the 24th. The apartments of M. Guizot were found practically as the Minister had left them at the moment of his hasty flight. On the desk the new incumbent found a sheaf of notes for a speech M. Guizot had prepared, and glancing down read thereon his own name. "Plus j'écoute M. de Lamartine, plus je sens que nous ne pourrons jamais nous entendre."[2] All the private papers and personal belongings of the late inmate and his family were entrusted to the care of a personal friend, and in the meanwhile Lamartine caused mattresses to be placed in the reception-rooms for himself and his staff.

Here, during the silent watches of the first night of his occupancy of the official residence, he meditated on the context of his manifesto to the European Powers. While at the Hôtel de Ville every instant of his time had been occupied either in quelling the anarchy which threatened hourly to submerge the Government and sweep away all semblance of order and authority, or in framing hasty decrees necessitated by the urgency of the peril. Some of these decrees may, indeed, be viewed in retrospect as almost puerile; yet the gravity of the crisis dictated measures such as the abolition of titles of nobility, thrown to the mob as a sop by individual members of the Provisional Government either in moments of panic or as a means for acquiring personal popularity.[1] Others, such as the abolition of capital punishment for political offences — a measure insisted upon by Lamartine — as well as the repeal of slavery in the colonies, and of the obnoxious press restrictions known as the "September Laws," were worthy of unstinted praise. Where Lamartine was lamentably weak, however, was in yielding, after dramatically insisting that even at the mouth of the cannon he would refuse his signature, to Louis Blanc's socialistic, nay, communistic, scheme for favouring the labouring classes of the capital at the expense of the vast majority of French citizens.[2] Never was more egregious political folly conceived than that by which the Provisional Government, in the name of the Republic not yet legally sanctioned by the country, guaranteed the *droit au travail*, in other words, State employment in National workshops at a wage fixed by the Commissioners at the Luxembourg.

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[1] Cf. Stern (*op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 33), who gives the evening of February 26 as the date on which Lamartine took possession: contra, Lamartine, *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 8.

[2] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 12; cf. also Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 34.

In his "Mémoires politiques," Lamartine seeks to extenuate the participation of the Government in Louis Blanc's so-called "Congress" at the Luxembourg. But the public held them responsible, as they undoubtedly were, and the panic increased from hour to hour, spreading through all classes of the population. The financial bankruptcy of the Government meant the ruin of the Republic. The extremity of the peril was realized by all when Garnier-Pagès undertook the apparently hopeless task of administering the national finances.[1] The Treasury found itself confronted with obligations far beyond its actual resources, while owing to the prevailing panic it became impossible to collect a loan of two hundred and fifty millions which had recently been floated. Gold and silver currency vanished as if by magic, and the negotiation of paper or drafts became more and more difficult. The specie which was held in the Bank of France, to which were added fifty millions recently forwarded by Russia, could not long withstand the drain to which the whole country subjected it. The issue of *assignats* was unhesitatingly condemned by the Government, for it was readily recognized that such a measure must add to the general alarm, and result in the concealment of the last five-franc piece.[2] A forced loan meant blood at the first sign of resistance on the part of those supposedly able to disgorge. The credit of the Government was practically nil, and a loan proposed by it must remain ineffectual. In its extremity the Government turned to the Bank of France. Instead of seizing the Bank, as some advised, Garnier-Pagès saved the situation by refusing a moratorium, or the issue of an inflated currency, and by merely insisting that the paper in circulation be accepted at its face value. In its turn the Bank saved the Government with a loan of two hundred and thirty million francs.[3] Lamartine tells us that other banks, and the public in general, soon realized that a patriotic confidence in the Government could alone save the country from disaster, and that rich and poor vied with each other in averting the necessity of a recourse to revolutionary measures. The revenue offices were thronged with taxpayers, all eager to acquit their debt, the discharge of which the priests preached as a public virtue.[1]

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[1] Cf. Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 151.

[2] Cf. Lamartine, *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. I, p. 329.

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[1] March 5. He succeeded M. Goudchaux, who had resigned in despair.

[2] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 91; cf. also Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 212.

[3] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 92; cf. also Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 88.

Lamartine believes that a serious error was made in not taking advantage of this confidence to float a national loan. Considerations of prudence, however, would appear to have restrained Garnier-Pagès from attempting such an operation at the opportune moment, and gradually the eagerness which had prompted the taxpayers to anticipate their obligations died out. Perhaps the magnitude of the Government's philanthropy alarmed the conservative elements of the population. There was every reason that it should, for many thousand workmen practically lived on the public bounty: "un jour de retard dans leur solde eut été le signal d'une immense sédition, du désespoir, et de la faim."[2]

But in spite of this satisfactory arrangement with the Bank of France, the outlays necessitated by the philanthropic policies adopted far exceeded the resources of the Government. Receipts for customs and export duties had dwindled almost to the vanishing point, and it soon became apparent that fresh taxation was imperative. In spite of violent opposition, both within the council and on the part of the public, it was decided to meet increasing obligations by the imposition of an extra forty-five centimes on each franc of the totality of direct taxation.[3] Unpopular as this measure was, and questionable as it may seem to political economists of to-day, there would appear little doubt as to the wisdom of its application at the time. As a matter of fact the very considerable increase of revenue obtained averted a crisis which must almost inevitably have ended in a reign of anarchy and the partial or total destruction of countless millions of national and private property. One hundred and ninety millions was the estimated yield of this extra taxation: yet as the Government authorized the collectors to apply it with indulgence where small landed proprietors were concerned, and to be firm only in their dealings with the wealthy, the net product fell to about one hundred and fifty millions. If we credit Lamartine, these one hundred and fifty millions and the two hundred and thirty millions advanced by the Bank of France, which took as security the State forests, covered all ordinary and extraordinary expenses for the Revolutionary Government, including a million a day for the State occupation of the unemployed.[1]

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 93. Stern (*op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 86) asserts that this was especially noticeable among the lower classes.

[2] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 94. It is manifestly impossible, however, that Lamartine's estimate of *six million* is correct.

[3] Cf. Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 92; also Lamartine, *Conseiller du peuple*, p. 143.

Universal suffrage had been the ideal of Lamartine's political *credo* since he had begun to interest himself in the social questions of his epoch. As early as 1831, when confiding his aspirations to M. Saullay, during his candidature as deputy from Bergues, he expressed the conviction that it behooved the legislator to "renew and reconstruct the political world on the broad basis of the most extended liberty and popular interests."[2] Nor had he, at any time during the subsequent seventeen years of parliamentary activity, balked at the consequences of this radical departure from the political principles of the moderate conservatism to which he still nominally adhered. With his unreserved acceptance of the democratic republic came also the obligation to admit in practice the theories he had professed. It is conceivable, however, that he may have entertained misgivings as to the use which might be made of this unrestricted franchise by an uneducated populace, totally ignorant of the benefits and dangers of the weapon within their grasp. In the session of March 4, the Provisional Government had fixed April 9 as the date for the elections, and the 20th of the same month for the meeting of the National Assembly. Article 6 of the decree established that every Frenchman became a voter, if aged twenty-one, if a resident in the commune for six months, and if not deprived of, or suspended from, his civic rights for crime or misdemeanour. Article 9 provided for a minimum of two thousand suffrages in order to nominate a representative of the people.

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[1] Cf. *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 96.

[2] Cf. H. Cochin, *Lamartine et la Flandre*, p. 368.

Doubtful as Lamartine must have been as to the wisdom of a system wherein there could be no real independence of choice, since, owing to the general lack of education, the illiterate voter must in the large majority of cases be completely at the mercy of the agent to whom he confided his wishes, he was powerless to stem the democratic flood. No limitation which went to exclude from the exercise of their new rights even those manifestly incapable would for an instant be tolerated by the popular leaders and demagogues, who counted on this very incapacity of the voter to secure the triumph of the cause they represented. Whatever the temper of the revolutionary factions in Paris might be, there could be little doubt but that in the provinces, and especially in the rural districts, the sentiments of the masses, who had accepted the Republic without keen enthusiasm, would be for moderation. Fearing the return of deputies not in sympathy with the Radicals of whom he was the leader, the Minister of the Interior, M. Ledru-Rollin, selected some four hundred commissioners whom he sent to the provinces in order to instil the constituencies with the theories his party deemed advisable. To these envoys Ledru-Rollin issued an official circular (March 11) which was and has been severely criticized, instructing his electioneering agents as to the rôle they were to play. "Your mandatory power is unlimited," he wrote. "Agents of revolutionary authority, you also are revolutionaries. The people's victory imposes upon you the duty to proclaim and consolidate its achievement. In order to fulfil this task you are invested with the sovereignty of the people; you owe to your conscience alone an accounting of your acts; you must do what circumstances dictate for the public weal."[1]

It is conceivable that such energetic measures should have met with sharp criticism from opponents, for they smacked singularly of an attempt at coercion, even intimidation. On the other hand, the Provisional Government was within its rights in selecting for the delicate mission men thoroughly in sympathy with the popular revolutionary movement which had placed the conduct of the people's cause in their hands. Lord Normanby was considerably shocked on reading M. Ledru-Rollin's circular, and immediately sought Lamartine in order to point out to him what he considered the "mischievous tendency" of its sentiments. "When such doctrines are to be enforced by power arbitrarily exercised," he complained, "there is an end of any pretence of freedom of choice." And he further pointed out to Lamartine that it "was above all important for the position of France towards Europe that the results of these elections should be received as the free expression of the national will."[2] There would seem no reason to question Lord Normanby's assertion that Lamartine had "*never seen*" the circular.

[1] Élias Regnault, *Histoire du gouvernement provisoire*, p. 201.

[2] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 217.

"He read it over with me," writes the Ambassador, "and quite agreed with the opinion of it I had just expressed. Upon the first paragraph he exclaimed, 'He would make Proconsuls, not Commissaries'; further on, 'that it was the creation of an electoral dictatorship,' and he repeated frequently on reading it, 'Très mauvais.'" M. Regnault asserts that the offensive circular was written by M. Jules Favre, the general secretary, and that it was "discussed, commented, and definitely adopted in the presence of the Minister."[1] Lamartine writes: "The Minister of the Interior, absorbed in the immensity of detail of his Department, was physically unable to answer for everything published under the ægis of his moral responsibility."[2] Madame Georges Sand, whose ready pen had been placed at the disposal of the Ministry of the Interior, was probably not altogether guiltless in this affair, for although she had promised Lamartine to lend her eloquent aid to the cause of "peace, discipline, and brotherhood," the theories of socialism attracted her irresistibly, and she had undertaken the editorship of an "official" publication, issued from the Ministry, entitled "Bulletin de la République." "Cette feuille incendiée des inspirations de communisme," writes Lamartine, "rappelait par les termes, les souvenirs néfastes de la première république, elle fanatisait les uns d'impatience, les autres de terreur."[3]

Himself the advocate of conciliation, a utopian in his eagerness for the amicable settlement of all social and political differences under the Ideal Republic, Lamartine felt keenly the rivalries and bitter party jealousies which were becoming ever more apparent.[4] But as yet they affected him personally but slightly, although several of his colleagues made him the object of insidious attacks. The leaders of the clubs, however, respected him, and believed in the purity of his democratic principles. Besides, they had need of his influence, or thought they might have, for his popularity with all classes was indeed prodigious.[1] It was under the shadow of this popularity that M. Ledru-Rollin sought to extend his personal influence in the hostile camp formed by the socialistic clubs. Lamartine and the majority of the Government realized the danger, but the peril of open discussion seemed almost as great. Two courses were open to the Government, either to insist on the Minister's resignation or frankly to accept the joint responsibility of his injudicious circulars. Unfortunately they did neither, and therein they showed their inherent weakness. To a deputation of the Republican Club which waited on him to express the anxiety aroused by Ledru-Rollin's circular, Lamartine openly rebuked the Minister's policy, it is true, but his speech partook rather of the nature of an explanation than a frank and distinct disavowal. After telling his hearers that it was not in his own name alone that he spoke, but in that of the majority of his colleagues assembled in council, he assures them that the Government "ne voulait peser et ne devait peser directement ni indirectement sur les élections"; that, as individuals, they were at liberty to "inspire" their friends, but as a Government they would blush to stoop to corruption or to use "moral pressure on the public conscience."[2] But the rift in the lute could not long be concealed, although Lamartine struggled manfully to shield his colleague, and effect at least a semblance of unity in the Council Chamber. He owed and gave the public a frank expression of his displeasure. "There need no longer be any reserve in commenting upon the division that has established itself amongst the members of the Provisional Government," wrote Lord Normanby on March 16. "M. Lamartine made it sufficiently notorious yesterday, in the answer he gave to the Republican Club at the Hôtel de Ville, who came to complain of the circular of M. Ledru-Rollin. There could not possibly be a more complete disclaimer of all the sentiments of that circular: all the doctrines which had excited so much alarm during the preceding days were scouted as tyrannical. So strong was the language used, and so powerful the effect produced, that it was thought impossible M. Ledru-Rollin could remain a member of the Government; and, accordingly, the report prevailed during the latter part of the evening, that he had been ejected by his colleagues, and the funds at once rose four per cent. This report was, however, at any rate premature; and it does not appear at all likely that so desperate and unscrupulous a party as that nominally headed by Ledru-Rollin would give up without a struggle in the streets." [1] Although Lamartine's eloquence was successful in temporarily "whitewashing" the Government, including Ledru-Rollin, the trouble was only partially averted, and the orator found himself compelled to address deputation after deputation until a late hour of the evening. To each he gave fresh assurance of the purity of the motives which guided their policy, and each in turn, subjugated by his words, dispersed to carry the news to the four quarters of the capital.[2]

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[1] Regnault, *op. cit.*, p. 194; *contra*, Lamartine, *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 164.

[2] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 133.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 138; cf. also Sand, *Souvenirs et idées*, pp. 8, 9.

[4] Cf. *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 117.

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[1] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 207; cf. also *Correspondance*, DCCCCXX.

[2] *La France parlementaire*, vol. V, p. 203; cf. also *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 167.

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[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 232. Lord Normanby adds: "When so much depends upon Lamartine's life, one cannot help fearing in such a struggle he may be picked off. He does not seem to anticipate any deliberate assassination, as the reaction would be dreaded; but there is a plan to overpower the National Guard at the Affaires Étrangères, to carry him off and shut him up in one of the fortresses now in possession of the Garde Mobile, who are most of them of the other party."

[2] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 170.

It was evident, however, that the existing dissensions must be faced without delay and a clear and definite understanding be reached, if the moral authority of the Government was to prevail. With this object in view Lamartine spent a portion of the night in composing the proclamation he intended his colleagues should sign on the morrow, and which was substantially "le désaveu, le démenti le plus textuel de la circulaire du Ministère de l'Intérieur." That he fully realized the gravity of the impending crisis is evinced by the fact that, contrary to custom, he went to the Hôtel de Ville on the morning of the 16th, "ready for anything, even the last extremities, with weapons on his person in order to defend himself against the rioters."

That either Ledru-Rollin or Louis Blanc aimed at the downfall of the Provisional Government there is no positive proof. But both were guilty of plotting and counterplotting with the seditious elements of the most advanced clubs, which looked with dissatisfaction on the moderation of the republicanism of those in power.[1] For reasons of their own, the leaders of the radical clubs desired a postponement of the elections fixed for April 9. They realized the reactionary tendencies of the rural voters and sought more time for the socialistic propaganda on which they were engaged. They also dreaded the presence in Paris of the regular troops which it was proposed to recall at the time of the elections, and mistrusted the possible temper of the National Guard under its existing organization. That this corps was more aristocratic than democratic in its essence had been early appreciated by the new régime, and a decree of February 27 had provided for the admission into the corps of every Frenchman who had attained his majority. On March 14, at the instigation of Ledru-Rollin, the Government had further decided that what were known as the "compagnies d'élite," grenadiers and voltigeurs, should be disbanded and the men fused with the general mass; while on April 18 elections should be held in virtue of which the officers should be elected by universal suffrage.[1] Thoroughly in accord with the democratic principles professed, these measures met, nevertheless, with violent opposition, not only on the part of the privileged regiments, angered at the prospect of merging their uniform with that of the masses, but by the entire bourgeoisie, from which class they were principally recruited.

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[1] Cf. Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 177; also Regnault, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

Deputations of the aggrieved "compagnies d'élite" had waited on M. Ledru-Rollin, who refused to receive them. Whereupon a hostile demonstration at the Hôtel de Ville was decided upon. Informed of this project M. Ledru-Rollin sought the aid of his friends in the extreme parties and the clubs for the organization of a counter-demonstration on the 17th, which, as he expressed it, "leur servira de leçon."[2]

This demonstration, known as that of the "Bonnets à poil," on account of the beaver-skin head-dress worn by the regiments, took place at the Hôtel de Ville on the 16th; but was received with only scant sympathy by Lamartine, who dismissed the malcontents with rebukes at their lack of patriotism and the puerile motives of their complaint. The more hot-headed members of the Guard objected that Lamartine's words amounted to an intimation that, although others were allowed to demonstrate with impunity, they, the defenders of civic order, were forbidden to express their grievances. General Courtais, the commander, accused them of being counter-revolutionaries, whereupon his sword was taken from him, and he was grossly insulted by his men. The proposal was even made that they should seize the Hôtel de

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[1] Cf. Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 178.

[2] Regnault, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

Ville, and throw the members of the Provisional Government out of the windows. But wiser counsels prevailed, and sullenly the manifestants returned to their barracks.[1]

Yet the significance of the demonstration could not be mistaken: it betrayed, under the guise of a petty military vanity, the deep-rooted class distinctions which persisted beneath the superficial professions of democratic equality the hour of peril had made politic. The bourgeoisie, encouraged by the prevailing order, now dared to lift its head and again aspire to the privileges it had enjoyed. Its confidence in Lamartine was unshaken, but it was felt that the time had come when their great leader should detach himself from the revolutionary elements of the Provisional Government, and place himself, in the name of the upper classes and of conservative opinion, at the head of affairs. But Lamartine was proof against any such temptation.[2] There is hardly a doubt that, if he had so desired, the National Guard would have proclaimed him Dictator at that moment, and that following their lead, the conservative elements constituting the vast majority throughout the country would have hailed him as their saviour. Bloodshed and civil strife must inevitably have followed, however, and this, at all costs, Lamartine was determined to avert. Besides, his loyalty to the colleagues the people had given him was unassailable, as will be seen later in the case of Ledru-Rollin. Differ with them he must, even to the length of tendering his resignation; but betray them, never. Meanwhile he was about to give an instance of his serious displeasure. After pacifying the turbulent National Guard, and armed with the proclamation he had prepared during the night, Lamartine entered the Council

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 171; also Maxime du Camp, *Souvenirs de l'année 1848*, p. 134; *La France parlementaire*, vol. V, p. 201; and Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 186.

[2] Cf. Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 185.

Chamber, where his colleagues were assembled. As he himself has said, the two camps were now face to face, outside and inside the Hôtel de Ville, "sombre, tense, and resolute as at the moment which precedes the combat."[1] Without loss of time Lamartine made it clear to his colleagues that he considered the action of the Minister of the Interior as conceived in a spirit which he could not accept as that of the Republic or of the majority of the Government, and which was far removed from his personal conception of the spirit of the institutions he represented. It was impossible, he affirmed, that policies so radically irreconcilable should emanate from a government which pretended to be in accord. Either the impression created by Ledru-Rollin's circular must be rectified by common consent, or they must part without possibility of reconciliation. The proclamation he had prepared must be the signal either for sincere agreement or for definite separation. Whereupon Lamartine read to his colleagues the liberal and conciliatory instructions he insisted should be sent to the commissaries who had been appointed to conduct the elections throughout the country.

Bitter as the medicine was to them, Louis Blanc and Ledru-Rollin swallowed it practically without protest, for they could not ignore the ascendancy which Lamartine exercised within the Council Chamber and over the National Guards, who, during the two hours the secret session lasted, continued to throng the Place de Grève.[2] Nor was Lamartine mistaken in his belief that Ledru-Rollin would yield without serious opposition to the policy of the majority, for he together with every member of the Government signed the proclamation, which was practically a disclaimer, after the acceptance of two or three insignificant amendments.[1] Nevertheless, Lamartine's victory was one of form rather than of substance. The proclamation, although it flattered the populace, lauding the heroism and humanity displayed during the opening scenes of the revolution, was essentially academic. The public accepted it, as had the members of the Council, for what it was, "a beautiful theory of government."[2] Of the sincerity of the republicanism of each individual member of the Provisional Government there could be no question — the struggle was between the Moderates and the Reds, and so far the Moderates were in a majority. Although Ledru-Rollin took the lesson meekly, he hoped for his revenge on the morrow.

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 172.

[2] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 179; cf. also Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 185, who believes that Lamartine was fully aware of Ledru-Rollin's weakness, and of the half-hearted support he received from Blanc and Albert, and in consequence did not seriously fear them.

The ill-advised action of the National Guard had aroused the ire of a large portion of the population. Of this Ledru-Rollin determined to take advantage in order to prove to his colleagues that his influence was as strong or stronger than theirs. M. Regnault does not believe that he sought the defeat of his colleagues, but that he merely wished to demonstrate the weapons he had at his command, should they not be disposed to condone his late independent action.[3] How far this statement can be taken literally it is difficult to say. The "desperate and unscrupulous"[4] party nominally headed by Ledru-Rollin, but of which he was perhaps more the tool than the leader, was certainly determined to coerce the Government into a postponement of the elections, and the removal of the regular troops from the neighbourhood of Paris. Such men as Barbès, Cabet, Raspail, and Blanqui, who controlled the more violent of the clubs, were far from submitting to the authority of either Ledru-Rollin or Blanc, although they might take advantage of their popularity to advance their own subversive ends. The socialism of Louis Blanc was too theoretical for these fanatics of communism. The republicanism of Ledru-Rollin was confined within narrow party limits, and was more political than social.[1] Nevertheless, together with Caussidière, the Prefect of Police, all these leaders, with different ends in view, lent their support to the seditious demonstration of March 17.[2]

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[1] Cf. Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 382. Documents historiques.

[2] Regnault, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

[3] *Histoire du gouvernement provisoire*, p. 222.

[4] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 232.

Actuated by widely differing motives the vast crowds pouring in from the faubourgs concentrated that morning on the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville. On the one side came those wishing to congratulate the Provisional Government on their victory over the National Guard, and to assure its members of their loyalty and confidence. On the other marched the legions whose belief in Ledru-Rollin was unshaken, and who assembled to thank him for his "dévouement à la nation." Scattered among all these were the leaders and emissaries of the clubs, who hoped to turn the demonstration into one of hostility towards the Government, and to impose their own authority. Stern affirms, however, that none of them wished to upset M. de Lamartine.[3] Lamartine, on the contrary, believed that the manifestation was directed against him personally by those who sought to avenge Ledru-Rollin's discomfiture and the humiliation inflicted on him by his colleagues owing to Lamartine's proclamation anent the election circular.[4] There would seem to be substantial foundation for this surmise, at least in so far as the partisans of the clubs and the social propagandists are concerned. Yet the bulk of the one hundred and fifty thousand men, who, attired not in their working blouses, but in their Sunday best,[1] assembled in the Place de la République, was animated with loyal sentiments towards the Government, and went to express their disapprobation of the unpatriotic action of the National Guard. Unfortunately the leaders of the clubs, together with their followers, in all some four or five thousand men, adroitly placed themselves at the head of the advancing columns, and on arriving at the Hôtel de Ville insisted on being received by the Government as the spokesmen of the seething multitudes.

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[1] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.* (*La politique intérieure*), p. 221.

[2] Cf. Regnault, *op. cit.*, p. 223; cf. also Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 189.

[3] *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 191, also p. 188.

[4] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 181.

Turning to those around him Lamartine, referring to the Revolution of '93, sadly observed: "To-day is our June 20th! Soon the Tenth of August will be here." Yet he refused to sanction the arrest of the leaders, known to be personally hostile to him, and gave orders to admit about one hundred chiefs of various clubs and so-called delegates of the people. Headed by the venerable Dupont de l'Eure, the Provisional Government faced the invaders, prepared to uphold the dignity, the moral independence and integrity of their office, or to die. To the question of what might be their business, a workman called Gérard replied by reading an address which demanded: the withdrawal of all regular troops from Paris; the postponement till April 5 of the election of the National Guard; and the adjournment till May 31 of the elections to the National Assembly.[2] Furthermore, the Government was called upon to deliberate forthwith, and to give an immediate answer. A glance at the threatening faces which pressed around was sufficient to show the nature of the demonstration — perhaps the most critical the Provisional Government had been forced to contend with. All the most violent social elements were represented, and many "figures inconnues, et dont l'expression avait quelque chose de sinistre," as even Louis Blanc, who knew most of the leaders, admitted.[1]

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[1] Garnier-Pagès, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 376.

[2] Regnault, *op. cit.*, p. 227. Lamartine says it was Blanqui who spoke in the name of his colleagues, but Stern also names Gérard. Cf. *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 194.

Despite the connivance of Blanc and Ledru-Rollin in the organization of the demonstration, which they had intended as in support of the Government minority, both now realized that the movement had passed beyond their control, and that they themselves were faced by the same alternative as that which confronted their colleagues of the majority.[2] Should the Government yield to the imperative demands of these fanatics, the authority it had relinquished would instantly pass into the hands of Blanqui and his henchmen in the clubs, and the Reign of Terror would begin. Although they had aspired to the leadership of the Government, neither Blanc nor Ledru-Rollin was prepared to immolate himself on the altar of communism. In view of the unexpected turn affairs had taken it behooved them to throw in their lot with that of the majority, and this M. Blanc very sensibly hastened to do. His answer to the peremptory exactions of the spokesman of the clubs was impregnated with diplomatic conciliation, but he made it clear that, although the Government would consent to deliberate the propositions just made, they would not do so under coercion. Ledru-Rollin followed his colleague. Explaining the nature of the material difficulties experienced in fixing a definite date for the elections, he reminded his hearers that while they undoubtedly represented the most enlightened elements of the capital, the Government represented France, and that it was manifestly impossible for them to come to an equitable conclusion concerning any adjournment of the dates for the expression of the national will, until the various departments had been consulted.[1] Courteous, but firm, he also declined to allow himself to be influenced by any attempt at intimidation, and urged his hearers to have patience and to place their trust in the Government the people had chosen as representative of their will.

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[1] *Pages d'histoire*, p. 90.

[2] Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 195.

Thus far Lamartine had kept silent, studying the seditious demonstration in which he felt that he was most directly concerned. Nor had he long to wait. Replying to Ledru-Rollin, M. Sobrier explained that the delegates of the people had no intention of doing violence to the Provisional Government, in which they had entire confidence. "Not in all," roughly interrupted one of Blanqui's followers, glancing pointedly at Lamartine, and hinting that a traitor lurked in their midst. "Lamartine! Lamartine!" echoed several voices. "Let him give us an explanation!"[2] The explanation desired was concerning the presence of troops in Paris. Always suspicious of Lamartine by reason of his aristocratic origin and the supposed Legitimist tendency of his political sympathies, the Radicals now held him personally accountable for the rumoured retention in the capital of a considerable body of regulars, whose presence, it was averred, was calculated to affect public opinion, if it did not influence directly the liberty of the poll.

In a calm and dignified speech Lamartine refuted the implied accusations of double-dealing, and confounded the factional suspicions by the unanswerable simplicity of the arguments he used. As to the questions on which the delegates demanded immediate deliberation, he refused to express an individual opinion, deeming them of national import, and as such beyond the action of any body of men representing merely local opinion. Any attempt to coerce the Government and restrain the freedom of their deliberation, he would, however, oppose while breath remained in his body. The inviolability of the Government elected by the people must be not only apparent but effective, and he very clearly notified the delegation that if, for the aims it had in view, he and his colleagues should deem it expedient to call the army to Paris, they would do so for the salvation of the Republic.[1] Applauded by the majority of those present, and especially encouraged by the friendly words of a labouring man, who shouted that the people thronging the square had assembled to express their confidence in the Government, Lamartine found for his peroration one of those telling phrases of which he possessed the secret. Turning to his unknown friend, he warned him with special significance: "I believe it, I am sure of it: but take heed, fellow-citizens, concerning meetings such as that to-day, no matter how fine they may be. The people's Eighteenth of Brumaire might well, against their wishes, cause the advent of an Eighteenth of Brumaire of Despotism; and neither you nor we desire that."[2] These words elicited general applause, and the disconcerted members of the extreme parties, realizing the futility of further action without the complicity of Ledru-Rollin and Blanc, but concealing ill the anger they felt, slowly withdrew. As he descended the stair Blanc was accosted by Flotte, one of Blanqui's most fanatic henchmen, with the hissing insult: "Tu es donc un traître, toi aussi!"[3]

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[1] Cf. Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 196; also Lamartine, *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 189.

[2] Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 197; Regnault, *op. cit.*, p. 229; Lamartine, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 191; Garnier-Pagès, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 383.

There is no doubt that the crisis was the most serious the Government had faced. A single rallying cry, the discharge of a musket, the assault of any one of the fanatics who thronged the Hôtel de Ville, must have been the signal for a bloody encounter. The firmness of the Government, their tact, and Lamartine's happy reference to an historical episode, fresh in the minds of all, turned the scales at the critical moment.[1] Meanwhile impatient clamours rent the air. The tens of thousands congregated in the vast square insisted on the presence of the Government, and Lamartine with his colleagues prepared to accede to the popular demand. Outwardly calm and collected, Lamartine, as they descended the stairs, observed to M. Pagnerre: "Ami, notre destinée est pourtant dans les mains d'un seul audacieux, et nous pouvons être tous massacrés." As a matter of fact, when the members of the Executive appeared, one of Blanqui's fanatics made an attack on M. Marrast, while another assaulted M. Garnier-Pagès, but both were quickly seized and overpowered by those present.[2] But the vast majority of the manifestants had, indeed, come in a pacific spirit and with the firm intention of upholding the Government. Once the leaders of the clubs under Blanqui's influence had been cowed, the danger was averted, and Louis Blanc had little difficulty in soothing the unrest and inducing the people to disperse quietly.

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. V, p. 211.

[2] Reference to the *coup d'état* of November 9, 1799, caused by the unpopularity of the Directoire, and which paved the way to the Consulate and Empire.

[3] Louis Blanc, *Pages d'histoire*, p. 94; cf. also Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 199.

Alone and on foot, Lamartine, pushing his way through the surging masses, finally reached the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the rue des Capucines. Here he found his wife and friends a prey to the greatest anxiety, for the most alarming rumours concerning his personal safety were being circulated. Blanqui, the secret police were assured, intended seizing Lamartine during the night, thus giving the signal for a bloody struggle between irresponsible anarchy and the moderate republicans who sought to consolidate their political system at the polls throughout France.[1]

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[1] Garnier-Pagès, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 388.

[2] *Ibid.*

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[1] Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 200. Adriano Colocci has recently (1912) published a complete biography of Paul de Flotte, one of Blanqui's henchmen, of whom Lamartine held a high opinion (*Paolo de Flotte.* Milan. Bocca). The Italian historian, however, would appear to lay undue stress on the importance of the influence De Flotte undoubtedly wielded. Lamartine admired De Flotte's sincerity of purpose, and recognized the moderation of his socialistic creed. Cf. *Histoire de la Révolution de 1848.*

CHAPTER XLIV

THE CLUBS — FOREIGN DEPUTATIONS

On the morrow (March 18) a grandiloquent proclamation was issued by the Government, thanking the citizens who had taken part in this magnificent testimonial of public confidence by which two hundred thousand men confirmed their transitory authority with "la force morale et la majesté du peuple souverain." [1]

Lamartine admits that the members of the Provisional Government "prudently feigned" to believe that the demonstration was intended as an homage, not a threat, although, of course, they one and all thoroughly understood its true purport.[2]

Lord Normanby would appear inclined to consider Lamartine as an incorrigible optimist when the latter assured him that he was convinced that two thirds or three fourths of the clubs were with him. "I should be much more reassured," he writes, "by this revived confidence, did I not know both the qualities and the weaknesses of Lamartine himself. It is very probable that some of those obscure plotters, brought into his presence, would be fascinated by his address, and appear convinced by his argument; and this effect would react upon himself, who is never disposed to underrate his personal influence, and make him believe they were more devoted to him than they really were. Some may also have only pretended to be convinced, waiting their own time of action, because, when those who were combined to upset the Government told him they meant to set him up again upon its ruins, it is hard to believe there was not in such a profession an intention to deceive." [1] An intention to deceive there certainly was; but Lamartine, convinced though he might be of his moral power over the masses, was not for a moment a dupe as to the ultimate aims of those who professed themselves his friends. If the energetic attitude of the people on March 17 forced some of those who shared power to feign acquiescence with the majority and to restrain their official rancour, the plotting never ceased, and none realized more acutely than Lamartine that the house divided against itself must fall. The only arms he had at his disposal to combat the nefarious influences which urged the dictatorship of the few in the name of Liberty were those calculated to hasten the elections whereby France, and not Paris alone, should dictate the will of the Nation. "He therefore resolved to fight desperately and, making use of all legitimate means, to frustrate the plots of those advocating a dictatorship or Committees of Public Safety, and to sacrifice himself, if necessary, in order to obtain the prompt and complete reëstablishment of the sovereignty of France as a whole and of a national representation." The peril was, indeed, extreme. There is no faintest ring of optimism in the sequel to the above-quoted paragraph. "But there was an abyss of anarchy and possible despotism which at that time it seemed impossible to cross in order to reach safety."[2]

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[1] Cf. Garnier-Pagès, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 393; also Victor Pierre, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 114.

[2] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 225. There would appear little foundation for the statement that this occurrence caused the Government to "se rapprocher de la bourgeoisie," as Léonard Gallois would have us believe. Cf. *Histoire de la république de 1848*, vol. I, p. 268.

To a government ruling without physical force, depending exclusively on the moral prestige of its members to hold in check self-seeking social agitators working on the baser passions of the proletariat, ordinary means of control or repression were unattainable. "There is no denying that within the last two or three days we have been advancing rapidly towards anarchy," noted Lord Normanby on the morrow of the fateful 17th; and he adds: "There is no confidence in any one, no credit, no employment, no money, no troops, no physical force anywhere but in the masses."[1] Although the demonstration of the 17th had ended peacefully, a considerable portion of those taking part in it retired with the consciousness of their irresistible force, and the British Ambassador had valid reason for the belief that they would again be summoned on the first pretence which offered, and that those intent on mischief would have little difficulty in urging the ignorant and half-starved multitude to acts of violence. Well might Lamartine experience a moment of discouragement. But as he tells us himself, he had no choice: "Il fallait triompher ou périr héroïquement et honorablement dans l'entreprise." [2] Prepared for the last extremity, conscious that his death would be the signal for a general uprising against the tyranny of the demagogue dictators, he pushed on towards his goal, decided to conciliate, even to compromise with the minority, for the furtherance of his ends. Prudent as was this determination in theory, its practical results were eventually to contribute to Lamartine's undoing.

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[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 238.

[2] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 228.

Realizing that since March 17 the majority of the Government had lost ground, Lamartine sought closer relations with the minority, represented by Ledru-Rollin and Blanc. Perhaps he imagined that his personal influence with the former, which was undoubtedly considerable, would act as a restraint to the ultra-republican tendencies by which he was surrounded, and that he would be able to confine his action within the limits of the moderation he himself advocated. "The imposing aspect of popular forces," opined Marie, "evidently exercised a pernicious sway on Lamartine's mind"; and that writer insinuates that the probable victory of the extremists over the moderates influenced his ambition.[1] If Lamartine did not actually conspire, as he was accused of doing, with the radical elements of the Government against his more moderate colleagues (and of this there is no proof), he was certainly guilty of the error of a too close apparent association with the men who represented principles not shared by the majority. This imprudence, not to call it by a harsher name, has been attributed to his vanity.[2] To be all things to all men would appear to have been the principle he adopted at this critical moment. He flattered the National Guard, he caressed Blanqui, spared Sobrier, and placated Caussidière, seeking to be the intermediary of to-day and the auxiliary of to-morrow.[3] But as a schemer ever ready to meet intrigue with counter-intrigue in the muddy waters of democracy, he was no match for the unscrupulous demagogues who, while using the prestige he enjoyed, were ever jealous of his preëminence, ever ready to drag him from his pedestal when his influence ran contrary to their selfish aims. His own ambitions were beyond their ken. "Ce qui le séduisait le plus dans le pouvoir, c'était la faculté de pardonner, d'être généreux, et de faire montre de beaux sentiments."[4]

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[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 243.

[2] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 202.

His prestige with the diplomats who had remained at their posts after the fall of the Monarchy was unquestioned. Lord Normanby, although rather inclined to patronize, has not hesitated to praise his frank and loyal bearing under the most trying circumstances. Habitually charged with answering formal addresses, he always found the attitude and language befitting the great nation he represented. "Jamais grand peuple n'eut un plus magnifique maître des cérémonies," writes Regnault. But this "magnificent master of ceremonies" had tasks and responsibilities outside the gilded salons of the Hôtel de Ville or Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The grim realities of his precarious position demanded a vigilance which allowed of no respite. The moral authority he wielded was but a poor substitute for the physical force upon which stable governments rest. He could do but little to remedy this defect in his armour, and whatever he did could be done only at considerable risk to his own popularity, and perhaps even at the cost of the very existence of the Government. Nevertheless, it was urgent that, in case of dire need, the Provisional Government, representing the Republic, should have at its disposal some tangible means of enforcing its authority. With this eventuality in view, Lamartine had opened secret communications with a military commander in whom he felt implicit confidence.[1]

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[1] Chérest, *Vie de A. T. Marie*, p. 159.

[2] Quentin-Bauchart, *Lamartine, la politique intérieure*, p. 243.

[3] Regnault, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

Twenty-six thousand men under General Négrier were assembled at Lille, on the Belgian frontier. Convinced of Négrier's loyalty to the Republic, Lamartine had defended him and his command against all attempts on the part of the more radical of his colleagues to recall and depose him. As Minister for Foreign Affairs he had insisted in council on the necessity of an armed force capable of repulsing any attempted invasion from the north. As a responsible statesman, he confesses that he desired an armed nucleus at Lille, in order that should the anarchical and bloodthirsty demagogues triumph in Paris, the moderate republicans could find safety in the north until Négrier had reconquered the capital.[2]

[1] Cf. *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 205.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 204.

Meanwhile Lamartine left no stone unturned in his efforts to conciliate the leaders of the ultra-republican and communistic clubs. With Raspail, who had proclaimed the Republic at the Hôtel de Ville before the formation of the Provisional Government, he had several interviews, as also with other politicians of the most advanced socialistic theories. Sobrier, as has been seen, was in sympathy with Lamartine, although acknowledging allegiance to Louis Blanc and the minority. In touch with the ultra-republicans who were constantly weaving plots to abduct Lamartine and the more conservative members of the Government, Sobrier had enrolled a special force, some five or six hundred strong, for their protection.[1] Lamartine would appear at first to have placed great confidence in this young revolutionist. Through his instrumentality quarters were procured in the rue de Rivoli, and there Sobrier established his headquarters. As an aid to the Prefect of Police, Caussidière, Sobrier undoubtedly did good service; but he was a scatter-brained, unbalanced man, and at a later date gave his employer considerable trouble. In his eagerness to bring under his influence even the adherents to the most extreme factions, Lamartine sought every opportunity of meeting and conversing with men known to be bitterly hostile to the Government. Not unnaturally this gave rise to suspicions among the more moderate elements. Hence the accusation of conspiracies having in view personal ambitions. Reactionaries and ultra-republicans alike began to share this feeling of distrust towards Lamartine, the purity of whose political motives was openly questioned. The interview with Blanqui described in his "Mémoires politiques," [2] and which will be considered in detail in due course, was undoubtedly fruitful in results. Caussidière, no lenient critic, asserts that

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 212.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 217–21.

Blanqui was in accord with Lamartine on many points, and that had Ledru-Rollin been willing, the three might have worked together.[1] This same author states that he repeatedly urged Lamartine to throw in his lot in all sincerity with the democratic minority of the Provisional Government, in order to establish the equilibrium necessary for the success of the revolution. "He said he would think it over," adds Caussidière.

Lamartine had not been conspicuously successful in his attempts at reconciliation with Ledru-Rollin, for the latter was at that period too deeply engrossed in his schemes for personal power,[2] but his "accord" with Blanqui was of the slightest. He tells us that he got all he wanted out of Blanqui, that is to say: "le concert pour la convocation de l'Assemblée et la promesse de combattre les tentations dictatoriales." [3] Perhaps Blanqui desired to meet the Minister of the Interior in order to dissuade him from pursuing the socialistic intrigues hostile to Lamartine. If this be so, Flocon, Jules Favre, and others of the minority were needlessly worried concerning the influences they dreaded when warning Ledru-Rollin against Blanqui, and urging an agreement with Lamartine "contre les exagérés et la réaction à la fois." Poor as was Ledru-Rollin's opinion of Lamartine's grasp of practical politics, he realized his immense intellectual superiority, and was inordinately jealous of his undeniable popularity. Hence his disinclination to enter into a partnership wherein he must content himself with the second place.[4]

With Louis Blanc there was no understanding possible. Since the manifestation of March 17, Blanc realized that he had in his hands a colossal force, and he was determined to use it at the opportune moment against the majority. He also feared the moral ascendancy of Lamartine, and sought only the occasion to discredit and crush his dangerous rival.[1]

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[1] Cf. *Mémoires de Caussidière*, vol. III, p. 81.

[2] Cf. Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.* (*La politique intérieure*), p. 244.

[3] Cf. *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 220.

[4] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

Lamartine is certainly sincere when he writes that his dealings with the clubs were actuated by one single object: "the convocation and acceptance by the people of Paris of the National Assembly."[2] Nevertheless, disinterested as his activity amongst these seditious elements may appear, there was at bottom a personal ambition. Since the overthrow of the Monarchy and the rise of his immense popularity and undoubted influence, Lamartine and his friends looked to the elections and the eventual action of the National Assembly for the realization of his dream. The clubs formed a stumbling-block and constituted a danger, precisely because they were antagonistic to the elections which were, he thought, to proclaim his triumph. To win over these opponents now became the object to which he devoted all his energies.[3] But the *sentimental socialism*[4] which constituted the basis of Lamartine's intercourse with the clubs was powerless to combat the grim realities which surrounded him, while his motives, noble and generous though they undoubtedly were, were open to suspicion and misinterpretation. As a matter of fact, the result was a miserable imbroglio of political intrigues, in the maze of which Lamartine seemed to be deceiving all parties in the interest of his personal ambitions.[5] The dupe of the more unscrupulous agitators, who cast him ruthlessly aside once his utility was exhausted, he found himself bound hand and foot by his own chivalrous sentiments of loyalty to those whose confidences he had received, or believed he had received.

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[1] Garnier-Pagès, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 76; cf. also Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

[2] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 221.

[3] Cf. Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.* (*La politique étrangère*), p. 246.

[4] Édouard Rod, *Lamartine*, p. 68.

[5] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 247; cf. also Blanc, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 11.

The dupe in a sense only, however. Recent historical research among the papers left by leaders of the clubs who were closest in touch with Lamartine make it evident that, for a certain time at least, much was expected of his influence and popularity. Nevertheless, great jealousy prevailed, and plots were rife to take his life.[1]

That Lamartine himself was satisfied concerning the utility of the prestige he wielded is manifest from the contents of a confidential note which he scribbled to M. de Champvans on March 22, 1848, while in the thick of the plots and counter-plots which raged around him. The letter is confidential and instructs M. Champvans to reply to the care of Dargaud, probably on account of the insecurity of private correspondence at either his home or his official residence. In this communication he tells his friend that the clubs are determined to upset the Provisional Government. "But they will replace me at the head of affairs again," he asserts; adding, however, that he would not accept, as he considers the government "*indivisible.*"[2] No more conclusive proof of his loyalty to his colleagues through thick and thin could be asked. The same letter contains an urgent appeal to Champvans to use all his influence to hasten the advent of the National Assembly. "Il n'y a de salut et de force que là. Elle sera immense et inviolable."

Terribly apprehensive as he could not fail to be, Lamartine now concentrated all his efforts towards this one aim: the meeting of the National Assembly. Lord Normanby notes this anxiety when transcribing Lamartine's remark to him, "Nous sommes sur un volcan";

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[1] Cf. Wassermann, *Les Clubs de Barbès et de Blanqui en 1848*, p. 125; cf. also Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 322.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCCXXIV.

adding, "He seemed to-day (March 18) to think worse of matters than he had ever previously done."[1] Would the clubs really have placed Lamartine at the head of affairs had they been successful in ousting the Provisional Government? That Lamartine himself doubted their sincerity would seem apparent from a conversation he had, at a later date, with Lacretelle. Asked if he did not believe he had compromised the duration of the Republic of 1848 by refusing the provisional dictatorship which might have been his either in March or in May of that year, Lamartine replied: "I would assuredly have achieved the reign of democracy; but I should have needed two scaffolds; one on the right for M. de Montalembert, the other on the left for Blanqui. Now, you know my opinions as to the inviolability of human life, and concerning the durability of governments founded on terrorism. I sought to transmit to history the proof that the Republic is synonymous with clemency and fraternity. The Republic I might then have essayed would have lasted two years: that which will soon be ours will last for centuries."[2] Yes, there was greatness, sublime nobility in his refusal to segregate personal ambitions and his loyalty to the men who turned their backs upon him in the hour of trial. An English critic, the diarist Greville, thus describes the general feeling at this moment: "In all this great drama Lamartine stands forth preëminently as the principal character; how long it may last God only knows, but such a fortnight of greatness the world has hardly ever seen; for fame and glory with posterity it were well for him to die now. His position is something superhuman at this moment; the eyes of the Universe are upon him, and he is not only the theme of general admiration and praise, but on him almost alone the hopes of the world are placed. He is the principal author of this Revolution: they say that his book (Les Girondins) has been a prime cause of it; and that which he has had the glory of directing, moderating, restraining. His labour has been stupendous, his eloquence wonderful."[1]

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[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 246; cf. also *Correspondance*, DCCCCXXVI, April I, where he uses the same expression as to Normanby.

[2] Charles Thuriet, *Anecdotes inédites sur Lamartine*, p. 24.

"Nature owns no man who is not a martyr withal."[2] Lamartine's martyrdom had begun. Not the least of the serious preoccupations which he had to face at this period was caused by the attitude assumed by the Government towards the foreign refugees who swarmed in Paris: Poles, Irish, Belgians, Germans, Hungarians, Norwegians, and Italians; political malcontents who looked to the French democracy not only for sympathy, but for armed assistance. "They seek to force the hand of the Government and drive it to carry war into their various countries accompanied by the French flag," complains the harassed legislator.[3] Delegations followed each other in rapid succession at the Hôtel de Ville, and most of them were received by Lamartine in person. The diplomacy of the Minister for Foreign Affairs was put to the test when replying to the inflammatory addresses presented by these hot-headed revolutionists, who invariably demanded arms and pecuniary assistance from the Government for their propaganda abroad. And yet, arduous as was the task, Lamartine, in the majority of cases, found words of conciliation and encouragement, which, while calming the impetuosity of his hearers, were not in too flagrant contradiction with the pacific assurances of the "Manifesto to Europe."

The most dangerous of these agitators were the Belgian democrats. The frontier of their kingdom was the most accessible from Paris; and racial and political affinities pointed to that artificially constituted state as peculiarly propitious ground for the spread of the democratic propaganda. The Government, or a portion of it, was inflexibly determined not to lend its aid to any scheme involving the sanctity of international pacts: yet its authority was only moral, at least in the capital. Certain sympathizers with the Belgian refugees, who if not members of the Government were certainly closely connected with it, were instrumental in aiding the conspiracy.[1] A contingent actually set out from Paris, railway accommodation having been provided, unknown to the Government. On their arrival at Lille the filibusters asked General Négrier for arms, but through the intercession of Lamartine, who had been warned of the expedition, these were refused.[2] Determined to proceed in spite of Négrier's opposition, and having surreptitiously received a consignment of arms, the filibusters crossed the frontier, only to be driven back after an inglorious struggle at the village of Risquons-Tout. Although undoubtedly fomented and abetted by individual democrats in Paris who represented themselves as Government agents, perhaps even secretly countenanced by the Ministry of the Interior, this raid was, nevertheless, the action of irresponsible agitators with which the majority of the Provisional Executive could have no sympathy.[3]

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[1] *The Greville Memoirs, a Journal of the Reign of Queen Victoria from 1837 to 1852*, entry of March 5, 1848, vol. II, p. 141.

[2] Carlyle, *Past and Present.*

[3] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 222.

M. de Freycinet, an aide-de-camp appointed by the Provisional Government, and to whom Ledru-Rollin proposed participation in this expedition, has left interesting notes on the subject. Refuting the generally accepted belief that Ledru-Rollin premeditated the proclamation of the republic in Belgium, whatever the risk of diplomatic complications, M. de Freycinet adds: "The conference at which I assisted left me with quite another impression. Ledru-Rollin seemed to submit to rather than desire the enterprise. Not daring to oppose force, he sought to guide it [*la canaliser*]. He hoped that with prudent men at its head no excesses would be committed, and that perhaps it would not cross the frontier." [1]

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[1] Cf. *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 223.

[2] Cf. Lamartine, *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 253; also Blanc, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 11.

[3] Stern (*op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 271) throws the blame on Caussidière, but admits the connivance of Ledru-Rollin.

The disturbances at Strasbourg and on the Rhine frontier were of slight importance. More serious was the attempted invasion of Savoy. An expedition, starting from Lyons, actually surprised and overpowered the garrison at Chambéry, but was ignominiously expelled on the morrow by a popular rising of the inhabitants. Appreciating the danger in this region, Lamartine offered Charles Albert the support of French troops to protect the Piedmontese border.[2] Although it would be unfair to hold Ledru-Rollin directly responsible for actions diametrically opposed to the letter and the spirit of Lamartine's "Manifesto to Europe," the weakness and intrigues of the Minister of the Interior undoubtedly lent colour to the accusations of double-dealing his enemies brought against him. Nor did Lamartine himself escape the opprobrium of those who insisted on the moral as well as political neutrality of the Provisional Government in its relations with foreign States. Now and again the Minister for Foreign Affairs, desirous as he was to keep the pledges he had given to Europe, allowed himself to be entrapped into expressions of sympathy in his speeches before subversive delegations of refugees and political plotters, which were, to say the least, not strictly in accord with the usages of prudent diplomacy.

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[1] *Souvenirs*, vol. I, p. 31; cf. also Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.* (*La politique intérieure*), p. 305. In Brussels the Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. d'Hoffschmidt, publicly absolved Lamartine of any disloyalty towards Belgium, citing, in his speech before the Chambers, the French Minister's repeated protests and proclaiming unshaken belief in their sincerity.

[2] Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 269.

Lord Normanby early found cause for dissatisfaction, and, on March 17, when some Irish residents in Paris presented the Provisional Government with a green flag, the Ambassador felt constrained to give utterance to his chagrin.[1] Lamartine makes no mention of this incident in his "Mémoires," but a paragraph inserted in the collection of his official speeches undoubtedly refers to Lord Normanby's report. The Irish deputation had insisted on being accompanied to the Hôtel de Ville by a delegation from the Irish College established in Paris. The seminarists had, however, become separated from their compatriots during the march to the Place de Grève, and as a matter of fact never reached their destination. According to Lord Normanby, Lamartine admitted having answered the deputation, but said he had seen no flag and made no allusion to it. Regretting that he had been inaccurately quoted, the Minister, when brought to book by the Ambassador, offered to insert in the "Moniteur" a paragraph, which he returned to the Council Room to write, and a copy of which he a few moments later handed Lord Normanby. It is evident that Lamartine begged the question, but the Ambassador "did not think it right, at a moment of such extreme embarrassment, to detain him further by any verbal criticisms." [2] It is probable that the paragraph published in "La France parlementaire" and the note given to the British Ambassador are identical. The document expresses in dignified terms the regret of the Provisional Government at not meeting the seminarists when they came to the Hôtel de Ville, and assures them of the sympathy of the Revolution of February with a religion in which it recognizes the sources of liberty and a double bond of the fraternity which exists between them.[1] Lord Palmerston had already expressed his dissatisfaction concerning Lamartine's allocutions to Irish deputations, on March 21, and urged the Ambassador to warn him that the strain on friendly relations was a dangerous one. It was consequently in compliance with direct instructions from the home Government that Lord Normanby so persistently impressed upon Lamartine the necessity of making the receptions as innocuous as possible.[2]

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[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 243.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 246.

On April 3, Lamartine was called upon to receive a far more important deputation of Irishmen who had come all the way from Dublin to seek the sympathy and aid of the French democratic Government. Lord Normanby, as early as March 23, had prepared Lamartine for the arrival of these disaffected compatriots and sought to prompt the Minister for Foreign Affairs as to the reply he desired should be made. " . . . Knowing that some of those who watch him are ready to say that I have too much influence with him, I am ever anxious, for his sake, not to put myself too forward at these moments," writes the British Ambassador.[3] Nevertheless, he constantly sought out opportunities to suggest the line of conduct desired, and Louis Blanc was not the only member of the Government who considered that Lamartine was too inclined to submit to influences which amounted almost to a mild form of dictation. In the present instance rumours were current that, "in case of a demand from Ireland, France would be ready to send over fifty thousand of her bravest citizens to fight." Ridiculous as such a statement must have appeared to Lord Normanby, who was, perhaps, the best-informed foreigner in Paris as to the existing political conditions, the Ambassador, earnestly desirous of preserving friendly relations between the two countries, discerned an element of discord which was not without peril.[1] Hence the insistence of his recommendations to Lamartine that the greatest prudence be exercised when replying to foreign delegations whose main object was to stir up strife and embarrass the too-pacifically inclined Provisional Government. Given the surroundings and the insecurity of his position, Lamartine's address to the Irish rebels — for such they assuredly were — was, as Lord Normanby puts it, "essentially sound, though somewhat inflated." [2] He flattered the envoys of "cette glorieuse île d'Érin qui, par le génie naturel de ses habitants, comme par les péripéties de son histoire, est à la fois la poésie et l'héroïsme des nations du Nord." And although he refrained from giving them any encouragement, he very neatly turned the difficulty by referring to the strained relations which Pitt's action had caused when he recognized and lent assistance to the civil strife aroused in France by the proclamation of the First Republic. "Cette conduite n'est pas encore, malgré nos efforts, tout à fait effacée de la mémoire de la nation." [3]

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 208.

[2] Ashley, *Life of Lord Palmerston*, vol. 1, p. 87.

[3] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 268.

On this occasion Lamartine found himself, perhaps, in the most delicate situation his responsibilities as Minister for Foreign Affairs had evoked. "L'entente anglaise, l'alliance anglaise s'il pouvait y parvenir, étaient le premier point de son programme comme la première nécessité de sa politique." [4] On the morrow of the Revolution of February, British neutrality had been the chief obstacle to a European coalition. But now Lamartine hoped for more than the security this neutrality offered the new-fledged Republic. He sought a formal guarantee against any foreign interference whatsoever.

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[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 268.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 295.

[3] *La France parlementaire*, vol. V, p. 235.

[4] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.* (*La politique étrangère*), p. 100.

On this point, however, the English Government remained inflexible, and Lamartine had been unable to get from Lord Normanby either a promise of material aid or even the moral support of the official recognition he persistently sought. Even later, when the revolutions in Vienna and Berlin (March 13 and 18 respectively) had dissipated the danger of intervention from those quarters and given French diplomacy a freer hand, Lamartine realized that Great Britain still held the key to the situation and exercised a preponderant influence over Continental politics.

In Italy, where the insurrection in Lombardy and Venetia and Charles Albert's campaign against Austria opened the door to French ambitions, Lamartine's diplomacy was made subservient to that of Palmerston. Even in Italy his deference to English susceptibilities was apparent. A recent French critic, M. Quentin-Bauchart, cites two instances which leave no room for doubt as to the immense importance attached by Lamartine to the goodwill of the statesman across the Channel. Early in March Ferdinand II of Naples requested, confidentially, the despatch to Sicilian waters of a French warship in order to counterbalance the moral influence exercised over the insurgents by the presence of the British fleet. Lamartine not only declined the request, but notified Normanby of the proposal.[1]

Again, in the beginning of April, the French Commissioner in Naples opposed the departure of a French vessel hired by sympathizers of the Italian cause against Austria for the transportation of volunteers to Lombardy, alleging that his Government desired to avoid giving umbrage to Great Britain.[1] But firm as was Lamartine's determination to conciliate England, other considerations forbade rash interference in the tangle of Italian politics. "In April," writes Mr. Thayer, "Lamartine, the political will-o'-the-wisp who temporarily served as head of the French Republic, spoke friendly words about Italy which, in his youth, he had called the 'land of the dead.'[2] Brofferio's party in Piedmont, and the Republicans elsewhere, wished to cement an alliance with France, and dreamed of the coming of a French army to hasten the expulsion of the Austrians: but to this scheme Charles Albert would not listen."[3] Lamartine was himself fully aware of the King of Sardinia's objections to foreign interventions in the affairs of Italy. At this moment the doctrine, "l'Italia farà da sè," was strenuously advocated by a majority of patriots who looked to Charles Albert for national salvation and were desirous of avoiding any recourse to foreign intervention in the guise of military aid and support. The republicans and radicals in the Peninsula might perhaps have welcomed French intervention, owing to the political creed their neighbours had recently embraced. Yet even they were not slow to realize the peril to Italian nationalism such interference might entail.

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[1] Despatch from Neapolitan Minister to France, March 10, 1848. Cf. Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.* (*La politique étrangère*), p. 102.

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[1] Despatch from Lord Minto to Palmerston, dated April 6, 1848. Cf. Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.* (*La politique étrangère*), p. 102.

[2] Cf. *Le dernier chant de Childe Harold.*

[3] W. R. Thayer, *Life and Times of Cavour*, vol. I, p. 95.

CHAPTER XLV

FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY

TRUE to the principles laid down in his "Manifesto to Europe," and certainly in accord with the majority of his colleagues, Lamartine, both in his foreign policy and in his dealings with politicians at home, had but one definite and fundamental object in view: the delivery of the free and untrammelled Republic into the hands of a National Assembly whose election faithfully represented the voice of France.

The maintenance of friendly relations with England (if possible a closer alliance with that country) seemed the surest guarantee for the liberties the people had won, as well as a safeguard against the revolutionary disorders on the Continent seeking to entangle the Provisional Government in the net of their international intrigues. The selfish policy of the July Monarchy, especially the Spanish marriages, had alienated British sympathies and caused the fall of Louis-Philippe to be regarded almost with complacency in Downing Street. Lamartine's attitude at the time when the question of the marriages was exciting public indignation had been appreciated in England, and on his assumption of office in the Executive he had early made it clear that, so far as Spain was concerned, English influences in that peninsula would not be challenged, provided the Orleanist party at Madrid permitted no hostile demonstration against the Republic.[1] On this account, to some extent at least, English statesmen were prepared to look without great regret on the change of government in France, so long as the establishment of popular liberties across the Channel gave no direct encouragement to political malcontents at home. As early as February 26, 1848, Lord Palmerston, writing to Lord Normanby, had stated: "Our principles of action are to acknowledge whatever rule may be established with apparent prospect of permanency, but none other. We desire friendship and extended commercial relations with France, and peace between France and the rest of Europe. We will engage to prevent the rest of Europe from meddling with France, which, indeed, we are quite sure they have no intention of doing. The French rulers must engage to prevent France from assailing any part of the rest of Europe. Upon such a basis our relations with France may be placed on a footing more friendly than they have been or were likely to be with Louis-Philippe or Guizot."[1] But great as was English official and public faith in Lamartine, his reception of the Irish deputations caused some alarm and misgivings. The leaders of these international manifestations not only expressed admiring sympathy with the liberal institutions the new era had inaugurated in France, but sought the direct intervention of the Provisional Government for the redress of political grievances at home, in defiance of Parliament and Crown. The Irish who invaded the Hôtel de Ville contended that, like the Poles and Italians, they also were an oppressed nationality, and had as good a right as either to look to democratic France for deliverance, even at the cost of war. Nor were the ultra-revolutionary fanatics in Paris alone inclined to pay that cost in their enthusiasm for their down-trodden brethren. "Les doléances irlandaises touchaient une fibre très sensible chez la population française," writes M. Quentin-Bauchart: "il était pour le gouvernement impossible de refuser de les écouter, et bien délicat de leur répondre."[1] A cursory glance through the pages of Lord Normanby's "Journal" is sufficient to convince the sceptic as to the gravity of the crisis. Again and again the Ambassador impressed on Lamartine the danger of indiscriminate expressions of sympathy with the openly avowed ambitions of foreign deputations, and although, at times, these suggestions amounted to an attempt to dictate the line of conduct Her Majesty's Government desired to see adopted, Lamartine, by sheer force of circumstances, as well as by reason of his eagerness to stand well with the Power which held the balance of Europe in its grasp, submitted as gracefully as he could. "I think," writes Lord Normanby on March 25, "I have now made M. Lamartine sufficiently sensible that this is the substantial ground of my complaint, and by repeated representations on the subject I have impressed upon him the importance to international relations, that in this particular instance of the approaching Irish deputation, considering its objectionable character, he should be most cautious in his answer, and make as clear as possible his disclaimer of the intention of pronouncing any opinion on the political questions which may concern different portions of the British Empire."[2]

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[1] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.* (*La politique étrangère*), p. 104.

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[1] Ashley, *Life of Lord Palmerston* (London, 1876), vol. 1, p. 77.

Lord Normanby could not, however, take serious exception to the substance of Lamartine's address of April 3. He confesses as much when he writes that, bearing in mind the difficulties of the position, it is not fair to "too nicely criticize particular phrases." On the whole, he considered that the address was "essentially sound, though somewhat inflated"; criticisms which Lamartine is said to have taken in very good part, admitting that much of what he said was "only figures of speech."[3]

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[1] *Op. cit.* (*La politique étrangère*), p. 109.

[2] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 259.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 296.

Nevertheless, as has been seen, the occasion was a very serious one, a fact none realized more deeply than Lamartine. Very firm in his allocution, he categorically refused to consider military intervention, asserting that the Irish did not constitute a nation, but were merely a political party.[1] After having assured his hearers of the deep-rooted sympathy of the French people, and of the hospitality they would always find awaiting them, Lamartine finished by demonstrating how unwarrantable any official interference with the private affairs of a friendly neighbour would be. "I have made it clear in the case of Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, and Italy," he declared. "I again repeat it concerning the differences any nation may have to settle with its home government."

This determined and energetic handling of the turbulent Irish was greatly appreciated in England. "We are not ashamed to confess," said the "Times," of April 5, "that we felt an unspeakable relief in the perusal of M. Lamartine's reply to the Irish addresses. . . . We confide in M. Lamartine, and that all the more because there is absolutely no other confidence in France. . . . We see revived on the bank of the Seine an Athenian Republic hanging on the lips of a Demosthenes, ready to kindle at a word, and to dare the power of Macedon with the tones of the orator still thrilling in its ear. . . . M. Lamartine has only to say the word, and a million furious propagandists are let loose on the world. He extends the olive branch, and we accept the pledge."

The "Daily News" of the same date was even more commendatory. "A more sensible, a more courageous, a more noble answer was never given by minister or sovereign to insidious petitioners than M. Lamartine made on Monday to Mr. Smith O'Brien and the Irish deputation. . . . We must say that the Foreign Minister of the French Provisional Government has shown an example of honesty, frankness, and disinterestedness in international policy, of which there are few examples in kingly history. M. Lamartine is no petty or local politician," etc., etc.

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 234; cf. also Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.* (*La politique étrangère*), p. 117.

"Ireland still looks dangerous," wrote the Prince Consort to Baron Stockmar, on April 11, but the British Government felt assured that as long as Lamartine's word counted for anything in France, the rebellious island would receive no aid from across the Channel.[1]

In Parliament, Lord John Russell gratefully acknowledged Lamartine's action, expressing his admiration for the French statesman's firmness and courage in the peculiarly difficult position in which he found himself, and from the Foreign Office instructed Lord Normanby to convey the following message: "Pray tell Lamartine how very much obliged we feel for his handsome and friendly conduct about the Irish deputation. His answer was most honourable and gentlemanlike, and just what might have been expected from a high-minded man like him." [2]

And a few days later (April 18) the same correspondent wrote: "Lamartine is really a wonderful fellow, and is endowed with great qualities. It is much to be desired that he should swim through the breakers and carry his country safe into port." This is followed by the enigmatic phrase: "I conclude that he has escaped one danger by the refusal to naturalize Brougham; for it is evident that our ex-Chancellor meant, if he had got himself elected, to have put up for being President of the Republic. It is woeful to see a man who is so near being a great man make himself so small." Yet, much as they might admire the personal courage and honesty of Lamartine, British statesmen were little inclined to risk any formal alliance with a government offering such scant guarantees of stability. As Lord Brougham pertinently put it, he felt only the confidence towards the men constituting the Provisional Government in France that one could place in men "dominated by the mob."

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[1] Sir Theodore Martin, *Life of the Prince Consort*, vol. II, p. 35.

[2] Ashley, *Life of Lord Palmerston*, vol. I, p. 88. Despatch dated April 4, 1848.

With these expressions of good-will and admiration for his personal conduct, Lamartine had perforce to be content. Lord Palmerston accepted willingly the French Minister's confidences, "mais uniquement pour en tirer parti et, au besoin, pour le trahir," especially in Italy.[1] As has been seen, Lamartine early realized the importance of the events taking place south of the Alps, and insisted on the formation of "an army of observation" on the frontier of Piedmont. Great as his desire for neutrality might be, it was indeed impossible for France to be an indifferent spectator. Traditions, too strong for any government to break, interested her in the relations of Italy and Austria. Guizot's Italian policy had been to maintain the *status quo;* but the Republic was more likely to attack despotism in its Austrian stronghold and free the Italians, whether they wished its help or not. When war broke out, Lamartine made generous offers to private individuals like Mazzini and Pepe, and asked leave of the Turin Government to send a corps of observation across the Alps.[2] But feeling in Italy was almost unanimous against accepting French help. Manin, indeed, more far-seeing and less confident, would have liked at least to have it secured in case of need; but even he dared go no farther than request the presence of French vessels in the Adriatic. The royalists dreaded a republican ally; the republicans wished to see Italy win her own laurels. None believed that France was single-hearted in her offer; all were confident that the national resources were sufficient for victory. Lamartine, indeed, sometimes urged action in despite of Italian wishes. He was suspicious of a North Italian Kingdom, and thought that French intervention might encourage the republicans of Lombardy and Venetia, and claim its reward in the cession of Savoy and Nice.[1] But the majority of the Executive Committee at Paris were opposed to interference unless the Italians asked for it; and Lamartine, either because his hands were tied or that his grandiloquent programme melted away, returned nothing but empty promises to Manin's appeals, and perhaps secretly agreed to let Austria have Venetia.[2] After the revolt of June and Lamartine's retirement from office, his successor, Bastide, was as reluctant as Lamartine to embark on a policy in Italy which offered great risks. In reference to Lamartine's proffered assistance, writing to his wife from Paris, on September 19, 1848, the Marquis Giorgio Pallavicino describes a conversation with General Subervie concerning the policy adopted in Piedmont earlier in the year: "I had to listen to more than one reproach on account of our refusal to accept the armed intervention offered us by Monsieur Lamartine." [3] In a previous conversation, Pallavicino had expressed to Lamartine his regret that circumstances had caused his retirement, saying that all Italy loved him for his generous programme, and regretting that he had not retained power. "Yes," replied Lamartine, "it is a misfortune for you that I could not remain in power. You ought to love me, for I also love Italy very dearly. It is the land of my imagination and of my heart."

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[1] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.* (*La politique étrangère*), p. 122.

[2] Mazzini, *Opere*, vol. x, p. 66; Pepe, *Events*, vol. I, p. 39.

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[1] Lamartine, *Trois mois*, pp. 232, 316; Garnier-Pagès, *Révolution*, vol. I, pp. 439–45; Bianchi, *Diplomazia*, vol. V, pp. 278–81, 292; Zini, *Storia Documents*, vol. I, pp. 658–62.

[2] Planat de la Faye, *Documents*, vol. I, pp. 197, 211–14; Bolton King, *A History of Italian Unity*, vol. I, p. 262.

[3] *Memorie di Giorgio Pallavicino*, vol. II, p. 18.

How far Italy might have been permanently grateful to Lamartine had circumstances permitted the evolution of his political programme in the peninsula is a question open to considerable speculation. With the rest of Europe, excepting possible but insignificant modifications of the frontier on the Rhine, Lamartine had small concern, but Italian affairs formed an important issue in the conduct of the Lamartinian diplomacy. If the French Minister did not seek to provoke issues, he certainly sought to obtain for his country additional influence; even eventual territorial aggrandizement.[1] The triple alliance between republican France, constitutional Italy, and the Swiss Confederation, which he meditated, would appear to have had this end in view.[2] Had circumstances permitted his lending aid to Charles Albert, compensation would unquestionably have been looked for in the cession to France of Savoy and Nice; thus anticipating by hardly more than a decade the price paid by Piedmont for the intervention of Napoleon III. His reply to a deputation of Savoyards who came to offer their adhesion to the Republic is characteristic. "Le gouvernement provisoire," he told them, "croit recevoir l'hommage d'une partie même de la nation française." And, although he dwelt on the desire of the Republic to maintain the peace of Europe, he stated frankly that should that peace be disturbed, France would "fly to their aid," and that should the map of Europe be modified in consequence, a fragment of that map would remain in their united hands.[3] Enigmatic as the phrase was, it left no doubt whatever as to what the course would be should the Republic be constrained to interfere in the struggle between Piedmont and Austria. Yet, much as he might desire the union with France of the French-speaking populations of Savoy and Nice, Lamartine was, up to the end of March, in no position to enforce a policy having such far-reaching consequences. His pacific assurance to the Austrian Ambassador in Paris, Count Apponyi, had early elicited from the Emperor the statement that the change of government in France would be regarded by the Dual Monarchy as a domestic affair with which Austria had no concern so long as existing European treaties or the frontiers of the States of the Empire were not menaced.[1] This was at once a concession and a warning, and under existing circumstances Lamartine had no choice but to follow in Guizot's footsteps and urge moderation to the Italian liberals who sought to kindle the firebrand and entangle France.[2] The risks of a reactionary coalition on the part of the monarchical systems of Continental Europe were still (in March) a factor to be reckoned with. The situation was not yet ripe for the action which Lamartine was to propose in May.[3] For the moment a patient diplomacy, having in view the maintenance of the political *status quo*, was all that could be attempted.

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[1] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.* (*La politique étrangère*), p. 207.

[2] Cf. *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 143.

[3] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. V, p. 220; cf. also Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

It was in this spirit that he addressed the Poles, who took the Hôtel de Ville almost literally by storm, on March 26. "The position of the Provisional Government," writes Lord Normanby, "was more difficult upon this than any other question of foreign policy, from the absurd line taken by their predecessors. In every address at the opening of the session, since the Revolution of

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[1] Cf. *Gazette officielle* of March 10; also Bianchi, *Storia documentata della diplomazia europea in Italia*, vol. v, p. 117.

[2] Cf. Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

[3] Cf. Garnier-Pagès, *op. cit.*, vol. VI, p. 389, *et seq.*

July, there has been inserted a paragraph expressing the wishes of the Legislature for the restored nationality of Poland. Therefore it was impossible that a young republic could express less sympathy than the successive governments of Louis-Philippe."[1] Lamartine bitterly complains of the continual agitation and insulting menaces of the exiles who infested Paris, and admits that they were at the root of many of the most perilous situations he was called upon to face. To declare war on their behalf against Prussia, Austria, and Russia would be, he maintained, "a crusade for the deliverance of a sepulchre"; but in refusing the Government's aid he exposed himself and his colleagues to the fury of the unthinking and irresponsible mob which sympathized with the turbulent foreigners, who had undoubted influence in the clubs and a voice in all of the seditious movements generated in these hot-beds of political intrigue.[2]

On March 25 a deputation from the clubs, composed almost entirely of these firebrands, appeared and insolently assured Lamartine that they, the Poles, were more masters in Paris than he; that they had forty thousand men in the Ateliers nationaux who were ready to march with them on the morrow against the Hôtel de Ville; and that should the Government refuse to accede to their demands, they were strong enough to upset them. Knowing that French demagogues made use of these hot-headed rebels to intimidate the Government and people alike, Lamartine, far from allowing himself to be dictated to, accepted the challenge. He warned his hearers, however, that should their deputation on the morrow degenerate into a manifestation, and a single Frenchman be found in their ranks, he would treat them no longer as guests of the Nation, "mais en perturbateurs de la France." [1] Considerable anxiety prevailed as to the outcome. The occasion might afford the pretext for one of those embarrassing international demonstrations the Government was particularly anxious to avoid, in view of the insecurity of its position at home. But as usual Lamartine steered a felicitous middle course, skilfully gliding over the troubled waters, and evading the jagged rocks of definite promises, while holding out alluring prospects of the universal satisfaction the Republic was to dispense. A critical reading of his speech must have failed to convince the most optimistic disciple of the political school he represented: yet such was the magic of his spoken words that the turbulent mob which had assembled to refute his utterances dispersed midst loud cries of "Vive Lamartine," "Vive la République."

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[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 271.

[2] Cf. *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 225; also S. Wassermann, *Les Clubs de Barbès et de Blanqui en 1848*, *passim.*

We look in vain on March 26 for evidences of the "extreme anxiety," the "waning of his star," which Daniel Stern asserts was discernible in his words and actions after the hostile demonstration of the 17th.[2] On the contrary, the address to the Poles is representative of Lamartine's almost incredible personal assurance: his firm belief that his ascendancy was based on no mere "enchantment of the imagination" of his hearers, but on his power to carry conviction by the sheer weight of the irrefutable arguments he advanced.[3]

But victories such as that which Lamartine achieved on March 17 were short-lived. Ever and anon the revolutionary clubs and their sympathizers sought fresh occasions to embarrass and discredit the Government. The elections, on which Lamartine counted to establish legally and definitely the acceptance throughout France of the Republic the Parisian populace had decreed, were fixed for April 23.[1] But between the present and that date stretched a period of fearful anxiety and ever-increasing uncertainty. Dupont de l'Eure, the nominal head of the Government, was too old to take an active part in affairs, and it was consequently to Lamartine that his colleagues looked for the daily, nay, hourly, renewal of the miracles his eloquence achieved when arguing with the numerous delegations of disgruntled foreigners or clamorous representatives of the various trades.[2] With nothing more substantial to back him than "la force morale de la parole," as he assured the Prince de Ligne, the Belgian Minister, the task of maintaining order was indeed an arduous one.[3] A fertile and continually recurring pretext for street agitation was found in the planting of trees of Liberty throughout the town. Such manifestations often degenerated into drunken brawls, for it became the custom to levy tribute on the whole neighbourhood, the money being spent on drink. Even the clergy was pressed into the service of the mob, the trees being blessed with half-barbaric rites, more or less dictated by the demagogues who invariably attended the ceremony. Between March 17 and April 10 there was a veritable orgy of this popular distraction, which, ostensibly harmless enough, frequently gave rise to dangerous forms of social unrest.[4] The abuse of these functions, to which in the beginning the Government had unhesitatingly subscribed, finally led to the necessity of "requesting" all "good citizens" to refrain from the practice.[5] Of course even this mild interference of the Provisional Government was exploited by the clubs as an indication of the reactionary policy Lamartine was determined to pursue.

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 227. [2] Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 283.

[3] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. V, p. 221.

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[1] Originally fixed for April 9, but postponed owing to Ledru-Rollin's plea of the impossibility of completing arrangements.

[2] Cf. Barthou, *Lamartine orateur*, p. 256.

[3] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 237.

[4] Cf. Victor Pierre, *Histoire de la république de 1848*, vol. 1, p. 186.

[5] Cf. L. Gallois, *Histoire de la rèpublique de 1848*, vol. 1, p. 273.

Perhaps this misinterpretation of his ulterior motives was one of the principal causes which urged Lamartine to a course, perilous under any circumstances, but particularly hazardous for one in the uncertain position he occupied. Personal intercourse with the most violent and anarchical leaders of the clubs, and, moreover, secret intercourse in which his colleagues in the Provisional Government had no share, could only lead to one supposition. A subordinate in the Ministry of the Interior, M. Élias Regnault,[1] published in 1850, a "History of the Provisional Government," which, if biased, constitutes, nevertheless, a valuable document. His appreciations of Lamartine's character and actions are not devoid of psychological and historical interest. A warm, ever-enthusiastic admirer of the poet-statesman's heroic attitude when face to face with the threatening mob, he does not hesitate to criticize or to blame his political conduct. "When the tribune is no longer in the forum, when the high priest descends from the altar and mingles with the difficulties of political life, he becomes blurred and diminished. M. Lamartine, in his struggles on the public square, was heroic and sublime; M. Lamartine, in his private contests with the Provisional Government, was weak and equivocal."[2] The critic substantiates his assertions as follows: "To M. Marrast, he blamed M. Ledru-Rollin's revolutionary excesses; to M. Ledru-Rollin, he complained of M. Marrast's supineness. For each he had a good word, as also for every plan that held out promise. He flattered the National Guard, and caressed Blanqui; he spared Sobrier, and cajoled Caussidière.

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[1] M. Regnault was Ledru-Rollin's "chef de cabinet"; in other words, chief clerk.

[2] Regnault, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

Placed on the apex of contentions, he delighted in the power this intermediary situation afforded for turning the scales: eager, moreover, to calm storms, and to act as a counterpoise and a pacificator, yet always with sufficient reserve that each expected to find in him the auxiliary of the morrow." There is certainly a grain of truth in this appreciation, as well as in the sentence which follows: "What seduced him most in the acquisition of power was the faculty it bestowed of pardon, of generosity, of the opportunity to show fine sentiment. Less anxious to found the future than to conquer the past by virtue of disinterestedness and abnegation, he transmogrified politics into a species of chivalry, more poetic than practical: permissible when only personal interests are sacrificed, but blameworthy when the public weal is at stake." [1]

Idealistic Lamartine's policy certainly was at times, but enough evidence has been afforded the reader to form an appreciation of the practical basis on which the ideals were founded. In the present issue Lamartine had ample warrant for the assertion that the choice of but two means was open to him: force and negotiation. Force, at the best but an uncertain asset founded on the coöperation of the troops General Négrier held together in the North at Lille, was to be thought of only as a last resource, should anarchy drive the Government from Paris. Negotiation, both in the heart of the Government and with those subversive elements which sought to oust and replace the Provisional Government, might at least serve to prolong the *status quo* until the elections.[2] Lamartine considered (and events proved that he was correct) that his best chance of success lay in this direction.

That his efforts should be misjudged and misrepresented was a foregone conclusion, for the jealousies and rivalries surrounding him were irreconcilable with any form of personal influence. During the inquest which investigated the acts of the Provisional Government, Lamartine was, indeed, accused of conspiracy with well-known anarchists and communistic leaders of the most violent clubs. "Yes! I conspired with them," he haughtily exclaimed; "but as the lightning-rod conspires with the thunderbolt." Could he win over these dangerous firebrands to moderation, could he prevail with them and lead them to accept the Republic on the lines laid down in his "Manifesto," he would be master of the situation through the influence of the very men who sought to paralyze and throttle Liberty by the exercise of terrorism and the dictatorship of irresponsible and blood-thirsty demagogues. Audacious as the scheme appeared, there is reason for the belief that had it not been attempted the position of the Provisional Government must have become intolerable, and the elections which were to legitimize the new form of popular government must have been frustrated. Civil war, probably a European conflagration, hung in the balance.[1] What M. Louis Barthou terms "la dictature de la persuasion"[2] was well worth the effort.

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[1] Regnault, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

[2] Cf. *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 204.

Blanqui, Barbès, Cabet, Raspail, and the mulatto De Flotte were at that moment the most prominent and influential leaders in the subversive movement directed against the party of order which sought to establish the Republic on a firm legal basis in accordance with the free and untrammelled expression of public opinion throughout France. These men Lamartine decided to see, and, if possible, convert to a more liberal and comprehensive view of the Republic and the duties and obligations of citizenship. Of course, he was fully informed of what

[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 207.

[2] *Lamartine orateur*, p. 236.

went on in the clubs over which they held sway: Sobrier, the head of his private police, saw to that. Lamartine himself acknowledges in his "Mémoires politiques" that "each member of the Government found it necessary to maintain an armed force for individual protection." [1] Even under these conditions it required not only moral but physical courage to expose himself to the perils of personal contact with one or the other of the fanatics, who, public rumour had it, were determined to get rid of him.

Yet Lamartine did not hesitate. At six o'clock one morning Blanqui, accompanied by a couple of men of sinister aspect, presented himself at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and asked to see the Minister. Always an early riser, Lamartine was astir, but only partially dressed. When Blanqui entered the room he advanced with bared breast and extended hand, exclaiming: "Well, Monsieur Blanqui, have you come to knife me? The hour is propitious and the occasion favourable. As you see, I have no cuirass." But Blanqui entertained no such fell design, and the two were soon deep in earnest converse concerning their respective theories of popular government. Lamartine admits that in the beginning he did the talking and Blanqui contented himself with listening. But towards the end of the interview the leader of the "Club des Clubs" would appear, according to Lamartine's record of the conversation, to have agreed with his interlocutor that "theories were but theories, and recognized that no immediate realization was possible outside the lines of guaranteed proprietary and acquired rights"; repudiating, in fact, the anarchical principles with which he was credited by the masses.[2] The date of this mysterious interview is uncertain: Lamartine, never chronologically accurate, states that it took place between the end of March and the beginning of April. It probably followed one which Blanqui had with Ledru-Rollin, and was prior to the publication in the "Revue Rétrospective," on March 31, 1848, of the famous Taschereau documents which branded Blanqui a traitor to the cause he was supposed to uphold.[1] Be this as it may, Lamartine admits that from this moment he did not cease in his efforts of maintaining friendly relations with the different parties who sought to direct the public conscience. His endeavour was invariably the same—"the convocation and acceptance by the people of Paris of the National Assembly."

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 212. For curious details cf. *Mémoires de Caussidière*, 5 vols., *passim.*

[2] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 219.

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[1] Cf. Wassermann, *Les Clubs de Barbès et de Blanqui en 1848*, p. 107; also Garnier-Pagès, *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. IV, p. 91. Quentin-Bauchart (*op. cit.*, p. 266) gives reason for the belief that this famous interview (postponed at least once by Lamartine) took place only a few days before the demonstration of April 16. Cf. also pamphlet which Blanqui published in 1848 in his own defence, entitled *Réponse du citoyen A. Blanqui.* The only evidence we possess is that of Lamartine and Blanqui. Garnier-Pagès (*op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 211) places the interview during the first days of April, but his testimony is evidently based on Lamartine's account in his *Histoire de la révolution de 1848.* Evidences of Blanqui's guilt are numerous in the *Souvenirs* of Edmond Biré, who gives a minute account of the Documents Taschereau. Cf. p. 71.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE SIXTEENTH OF APRIL

As the date fixed for the elections approached, the seething activity of the Clubs redoubled and their number increased. The statistics published by the commission appointed to investigate the events of May and June cite one hundred and forty-seven clubs on March 30, 1848; Garnier-Pagès affirms that the number soon reached three hundred; and Lucas states that in less than a month two hundred and fifty were added, and that the total attained four hundred and fifty.[1] Although many of these institutions were ephemeral, sometimes merely electoral confabulations or temporary associations held together by more or less material interests, a certain percentage claimed the dignity of politico-social bodies regularly constituted for the enforcement of the ideals they represented.

The Government, as has been seen, was divided. The minority, fearing, or professing to fear, a snare for the reëstablishment of the monarchical system, and hypnotized by the turbulent popularity of prominent communistic tribunes in the more powerful clubs, sought to counterbalance the influence possessed by their colleagues of the majority (of which Lamartine was the acknowledged leader) by an ever closer association with the men who regarded the advent of a legally elected National Assembly as the death-knell of their reign. Lamartine, in spite of the nefarious intrigues of Ledru-Rollin, which, as a matter of fact, he had neutralized by personal contact with members of the extreme parties, still held the situation well in hand during the early days of April. But the tension was becoming ever more dangerous. Even the "National" party, which had so largely contributed to his accession to power and his stability in office (if, indeed, such terms can be applied to the precarious position he held), aware of his *rapprochement* with such revolutionists as Blanqui, Barbès, and Cabet, was now showing signs of irritation and suspicion.[1] That Lamartine had been deeply impressed by the demonstration of March 17 there can be no question. Yet it would be dangerous and unfair to accept unhesitatingly the theory that, despairing of success with the moderates, he was ready to throw in his lot with the extremists.[2] It is much more probable that, still cherishing his illusions concerning his personal weight with both parties, he was determined to push his efforts for conciliation to the utmost limits, even at the risk of compromising himself. Proof of equivocal double-dealing there is none, in spite of the accusations levelled against him by enemies and former friends, who detected in his actions exorbitant personal ambition. To the impartial historian, however, Lamartine is entitled to the benefit of the doubt. Moreover, his fidelity and loyalty, when the hour of reckoning came, to the companions who had shared with him the peril and anguish of those months of responsibility clothed with the mere travesty of power, is, or ought to be, conclusive evidence of his innocence. This steadfast loyalty was alone the cause of his political undoing.[3]

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[1] Cf. Wassermann, *op. cit.*, p. 2; also Garnier-Pagès, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 123, and Caussidière, *Mémoires*, vol. I, p. 165.

Eager as he was to secure harmony between the conflicting political and social elements struggling for su-

[1] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.* (*La politique intérieure*), p. 242.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 264.

[3] "Cela suffit pour l'abattre," wrote an eye-witness who knew him well. Jules Simon, *Quatre portraits*, p. 40.

premacy, Lamartine, despite his illusions, fully realized that the support of an adequate and regular military force could alone guarantee the maintenance of order. It was to the formation of a body of armed citizens, who should be hand in hand with the regulars at his disposal, that he now concentrated his effort. The task was no light one. Insubordination and desertions had weakened the moral tone of the remnant of the army which, in the provinces, still upheld the Republic. The clubs had insidiously undermined discipline in the ranks and rendered dubious the allegiance of many officers as well. The intrigues of the party of the "National" had forced General Subervie's resignation in spite of Lamartine's protection, and the scientist, François Arago, had succeeded him. Assisted by a board of several generals, Arago soon proved himself a thoroughly efficient organizer and a valuable administrator.[1]

Although Lamartine left technical details to the Minister of War and his advisers, he appears to have exercised a close surveillance over this department. To his influence was due, against the opinion of the Military Board, the recall to France from Algeria of twenty-seven thousand men.[2] Desirous, moreover, that at all costs Paris be saved from becoming the prey of the irreconcilable extremists in the clubs, he proposed the formation of three hundred battalions of Gardes Mobiles, in the capital and neighbourhood, all armed and equipped, disciplined and trained, but to be subject to call only in case of imminent peril or the menace of internecine strife.[3] Owing largely to the support of Flocon, this measure was adopted by his colleagues, and proved of inestimable value in the hour of stress.[4] Convinced that he himself would be the first victim of a popular uprising in the capital, and fully prepared to make the sacrifice of his life, Lamartine hoped that, through the intervention of the provinces, his death would at least be the signal for the triumph of the ideals which he represented.[1]

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[1] Cf. Garnier-Pagès, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 237.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 38; cf. also Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

[3] Lamartine, *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, p. 274.

[4] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 261.

To secure the efficiency of his project and guarantee the safety and independence of the National Assembly which was to meet on May 4, the coöperation of a reliable and capable military commander was imperative. To Lamartine, General Cavaignac, then Governor-General of the African colonies, seemed the man possessing the necessary requirements, and when his negotiations were finally crowned with success, he acknowledges that a load was lifted from his shoulders, and that he advanced "avec plus de confiance vers l'inconnu." [2] It was, indeed, the unknown that confronted him. A little over a fortnight separated the tottering and beleagured Provisional Government from Easter Sunday, April 27. Would that date be reached in safety? Would it be given Lamartine to hand over to the National Assembly even the semblance of power he still enjoyed? Through his secret police, and the warnings of friends who penetrated the recesses of the most clandestine subversive associations, Lamartine was made to realize the peril.

Louis Blanc and Albert, who ruled supreme at the Luxembourg over thirty or forty thousand workmen of the Ateliers nationaux, were known to be hatching trouble. During a stormy session on April 14, these leaders made it clear to their colleagues that they believed themselves the masters of the situation. No attempt was made on their part to conceal the project, two days later, of an immense manifestation of the proletariat to secure the adjournment of the elections and the redress of certain grievances anent the selection of officers in the National Guard. Nor did the ringleaders hesitate to affirm that the result of this manifestation would be the "épuration" of the existing Government through the elimination of certain prominent members of the majority, and the adjunction in their stead of several chiefs of clubs, thus converting the present minority into an effective majority. A Committee of Public Safety was even hinted at; this committee to exercise supreme authority until such time as it might deem expedient to assemble a convention. Lamartine asserts that his colleagues were more "indignant than astonished."[1] He had, of course, expected trouble. But even now he could not bring himself to believe in treachery. Yet, realizing that Blanc and Albert undoubtedly possessed more authority than he over the elements so directly under their control, he adjured them "with real pain, but with a purposely exaggerated profusion of energetic epithets," to use all the moral suasion at their command to prevent a demonstration "so odious to the provinces, so threatening for the peace of Paris, and so fatal to the Republic."

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 267.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 264.

Needless to say, his efforts were vain. Blanc and Albert listened with feigned solicitude to his expostulations, professed compliance, but returned on the morrow to inform the Minister for Foreign Affairs that their intervention with the leaders and organizers of the proposed manifestation had proved sterile. Hastily the members of the majority of the Government concerted measures likely to insure at least the temporary safety of the institutions they represented. The first clanging of the tocsin-bell at the Hôtel de Ville was to be the signal for the assembling of armed citizens steadfast in their allegiance to the Government of their choice. Lamartine determined to himself take command at the Hôtel de

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 270.

Ville, and there sacrifice his life, if necessary, in defence of the trust he had assumed. Having burnt all compromising papers, he sought a few hours' rest. Hardly had he fallen asleep, however, before his emissaries, who had attended the meetings of various clubs, insisted on being admitted to his presence. They brought alarming tidings. The clubs had decreed permanent sessions, and were resolved, having obtained arms, to convoke the dissentient elements of the populace on the Champs de Mars next day. At least one hundred thousand malcontents of all classes of society were expected to respond to their call to arms. At midday this vast army, swelled *en route* by the floating elements ever in search of agitation, would march to the Hôtel de Ville, storm the stronghold of the Government, decimate the majority, remove such members as Lamartine, Marie, Garnier-Pagès, Marrast, even old Dupont de l'Eure, and place their own leaders, terrorists and social extremists for the most part, in their stead. Strangely enough, Blanqui was included in the holocaust, for he was, as Lamartine puts it, "the terror of terrorists less popular or less audacious than he,"[1] and consequently feared and suspected, especially since the publication of the Taschereau documents. Nevertheless, according to information received by Lord Normanby, Blanqui was to assist, with all his club, in the proposed revolutionary attack, and "at the Club, on Saturday night (the 15th), most violent language was used, especially against Lamartine."[2]

Fortunately the leaders of the clubs were soon themselves at loggerheads. Ledru-Rollin's dictatorship was no longer unanimously accepted, although his coöperation was deemed indispensable. It became evident that he was to be used as a cat's-paw by those directing the insurrectionary movement, and that he would be discarded once the object was achieved.[1] The Minister of the Interior himself realized that, in so far as his undisputed personal ambitions were concerned, the game was up. Was it on this account, and in order to save what prestige still remained to him, that he came to Lamartine at dawn of the fateful 16th of April? Lamartine was aware of the doubtful behaviour of his colleague; yet he seems to have believed him incapable of actual treachery. At all events, he disclaims surprise when Ledru-Rollin appeared protesting that his name had been usurped and made use of against his will by the factious leaders, and professing his determination to die side by side with his colleagues. "In a few hours," stammered the terror-stricken man, "we shall be attacked by over one hundred thousand rioters. What course shall we adopt? I come to take counsel with you, because I know you keep your *sang-froid* in the face of popular risings, and that desperate situations do not cause you to flinch." [2]

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[1] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 314.

[2] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 320.

To this appeal Lamartine replied that but one course was open to them, and that not a minute was to be lost. "Go at once," he added, "and order the troops to be in readiness. As Minister of the Interior you are authorized to call the National Guard to arms. I will arouse the Mobile, and shut myself up with them in the Hôtel de Ville, and there await the insurrectionary hordes. Either the National Guard will refuse to answer the summons, the City Hall will be stormed, and I shall perish at my post, or the call to arms will be responded to, and the fusillade being heard, the troops will rush to my relief, and will entrap the rebels between two fires, deliver the Government, and thus establish the physical force the Republic has such need of. I am prepared for either contingency."[1] Mistrusting, however, the alacrity with which Ledru-Rollin might be expected to carry out the measures he had proposed, Lamartine determined, in so far as in his power lay, to take matters into his own hands. Without delay he proceeded to Headquarters to urge General Courtais to action. He then secured a supply of ammunition and hastened to make preparations for the siege he expected in the Hôtel de Ville.

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[1] Garnier-Pagès, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 345.

[2] Lamartine, *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 316.

Meanwhile, General Changarnier, recently named Ambassador at Berlin, called at the Foreign Office, and, at the request of Madame de Lamartine, rushed to the aid of her husband. Lamartine gratefully acknowledges the invaluable services rendered him by the General, whom an eye-witness (Lord Normanby) believes to have been the saviour of the situation, as he found both Lamartine and Marrast (Mayor of Paris) "courageous but hopeless." It was the General who persuaded Marrast to issue immediately orders for the assemblage of the National Guard. "Men on horseback were despatched at once with these orders to the twelve different *mairies*, and such was the zeal and alacrity shown by the National Guard in all quarters of the town, that though it was half-past twelve before the orders left the Hôtel de Ville, yet before two o'clock, the hour at which the popular demonstration was to march from the Champ de Mars, one hundred and thirty thousand men, in and out of uniform, were under arms, and above fifty thousand bayonets assembled round the Hôtel de Ville. The orders by which they débouched there from different quarters were superintended by General Changarnier, who, though without any command, and in plain clothes, undertook the military arrangements under the authority of M. Lamartine."[2]

Lamartine's own version of the episode, although it is much more copious in detail, tallies accurately with the British Ambassador's notes. Both would appear to have entertained serious doubts as to Ledru-Rollin's loyalty; and this feeling of suspicion was shared by Changarnier. It was only after the magnificent response of the National Guard to the summons issued that Lamartine, "henceforth certain that the Minister of the Interior had himself given the order, and committed himself to the cause of unity and integrity of the Government," [1] felt at liberty to insist, in his speeches, on the collective action of his colleagues. Lord Normanby states that on his arrival at the Hôtel de Ville, Changarnier found Lamartine and Marrast entirely without resource of any kind, fully expecting to be massacred, and awaiting the event without intending to make any further effort.[2] This is doubtful, however, and not in accord with Lamartine's account of the preparations he had made. Moreover, Stern, generally reliable, asserts that early on the morning of the 16th, Marrast had issued secret orders to the various *mairies* that the National Guard be held in readiness in case of need.[3] Although in no sense detracting from the value of Changarnier's splendid services, Lamartine's forethought is patent in all accounts given of the episode. Nevertheless, both he and Marrast undoubtedly passed through some hours of intense mental anguish and apprehension before relief came.

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[1] Cf. also Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 322.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 324.

Meanwhile the Champ de Mars was rapidly filling up. But the majority of those who flocked to the meeting there had no knowledge of the real object of their leaders, believing solely in its reference to the election of officers in the National Guard. Between eleven and twelve o'clock the crowd mustered some thirty or forty thousand strong. Harangues were made which soon rendered the aims of the leaders clear, and although many were prepared for action, when the measures adopted by the Government leaked out, and it became known that the *rappel* had been sounded and responded to by the National Guard, enthusiasm waned. Little by little the forty-odd thousand were reduced by half, many honest workingmen hurrying off to take their places in the ranks and to stand by the Provisional Government.[1] Appreciating the danger of temporizing further, the chiefs decided to march at once with the remnant of their "army" upon the Hôtel de Ville. *En route* a certain number of idlers and fanatics swelled the procession, but when at two o'clock it reached the Quai du Louvre, its ranks had not materially increased, for all along the line of march, as the real situation became more clear, desertions were frequent. At this point the invading column was blanketed by two legions of the Garde Nationale, and a few paces farther on the ranks were cut. In driblets the manifestants oozed through the intervening files of soldiers, struggling individually now to reach their goal.[2]

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[1] Lamartine, *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 283.

[2] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 333.

[3] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 297.

Lamartine, who with Marrast was the only member of the Government present until four o'clock, was indefatigable in his efforts to stimulate the loyalty and energy of those who had flocked to the rescue. Now from the windows, now in the courtyards or on the staircases of the Hôtel de Ville, he ceaselessly harangued deputations from all the military bodies, or civilians who offered service. The backbone of the insurrectionary movement was broken, but the alarm had been widespread and the peril real. The twenty thousand insurgents of the Champ de Mars, cornered on the quais, were still filing crestfallen between the serried ranks massed on the Place de Grève. Amidst the jeers and banter of the populace the stream gradually diminished, to lose itself within the secrecy of the clubs.[1]

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[1] Garnier-Pagès, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, chap. VIII, *passim.*

[2] Cf. Lamartine, *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 328, and Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

When Louis Blanc finally came bustling up to the Hôtel de Ville and found Lamartine receiving the various deputations, he expostulated loudly, asking whether he (Lamartine) considered himself "above the Government; and inquired why all that unnecessary force had been displayed. Lamartine recommended silence to M. Blanc, as, if he provoked him to speak, he might find that he knew things which he would wish concealed, and M. Blanc submitted, without reply, to the insinuation."[2] M. Louis Blanc was "lacking in political instinct," writes Daniel Stern; and the part he played on April 16 certainly bears out the assertion. His feelings may be better imagined than described when the vociferations of the legions of National Guards smote his ears. "À bas Blanqui! À bas Louis Blanc! À bas Cabet! À l'eau les communistes!" they yelled. And a mighty roar from thousands of loyal troops made the city ring with the echoes of "Vive Lamartine! Vive la République!" [3]

"M. de Lamartine n'entend rien à la politique, ne s'en mêlera pas, laissera faire," had been Ledru-Rollin's argument with his fellow-conspirators. Yet the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in spite of his generous illusions, had been a match for his colleagues in the game they sought to play. "Ce fut le plus beau jour de ma vie politique," wrote Lamartine when describing the episodes of that fateful crisis; and he adds optimistically: "Le monde social était retrouvé," meaning that to the party of order, which he represented, must be attributed the victory. Well might he feel satisfaction over the revulsion of public opinion against conspirators and demagogues, for it had been spontaneous and sincere. The response of the National Guard was a magnificent triumph, and lent colour to the belief that the worst was over. Moreover, his personal prestige with the members of the Government had been immeasurably increased, and all looked to him for their personal as well as the public salvation. Normanby affirms that during the march past of the Guard, his colleagues insisted on his presence in their midst, "lest their reception by that body should not be favourable."[1] The Ambassador adds: "My own impression, derived from all I heard and all I saw myself yesterday, is that the plot, whatever it was, has produced a very imposing demonstration in behalf of the cause of order and regular government; and that it was principally useful in restoring to the National Guards a consciousness of their force, showing at the same time an excellent spirit on behalf of those who had been lately added to that body." But the perspicacious diplomatist foresaw that Lamartine's personal position was, and must remain for the next few weeks, "one of great danger, exposed as he is to the concentrated hostility and hatred of the defeated ultra-revolutionary party."

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[1] Lamartine, *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 330.

[2] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 325; cf. Lamartine (*Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 331), who mentions Albert as arriving with Blanc and confesses having lost his temper during the interview.

[3] Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 277 and 301.

None realized more fully than Lamartine the peril of strife within the Council Chamber. On this, as on other occasions, he sought, not to isolate himself, but, on the contrary, to identify his policy with that of his colleagues, and, at least in public, to show a united front. This unity he insisted upon in each of the numerous speeches he made before the deputations which flocked to the Hôtel de Ville. To one and all he proclaimed the harmony reigning in the bosom of the Government. "Cette union est le symbole de celle de tous les citoyens," he assured Chateaurenaud, spokesman of the National Guard, carefully avoiding any word or hint of reproach or suspicion concerning any member of the Provisional Government.[1]

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[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 326.

It has been said, and not without substantial reason, that Lamartine did not possess, politically speaking, a very fine sense of values. Undeniably the more subtle shades of the science of politics often escaped him, for he was himself too whole-hearted and sincere always to detect the Machiavelism practised by his opponents. "Le sens politique est le sens des généralités," affirms Prince von Bülow, himself no mean exponent of the instinct.[2] If he be correct, Lamartine was a shining example of political sagacity, for he certainly possessed the instinct of generalities, however lacking he may have been in the minutiæ of that complicated science. Therein lay at once his strength and his weakness: his strength on account of the instinctive and comprehensive grasp it gave him of a situation; his weakness because ignorance or disdain of detail often put him at the mercy of antagonists less transcendent but infinitely more practical. But if wit and humour form a part of the "sens politique," as they are generally supposed to in Anglo-Saxon lands, it must be confessed that Lamartine was inadequately equipped. "Seul l'esprit lui faisait défaut," admits M. Barthou in his admirable analytical study of "Lamartine orateur." [3] Daniel Stern also acknowledges that the essentially French quality termed "esprit," which for want of a better term is translated "wit," was foreign to Lamartine's mode of thought. He never employed it in debate, nor did he recognize its value. Himself mentally incapable of either irony or persiflage in political repartee, he ignored it in others. Much as he admired the sonorous eloquence of the great British parliamentary orators, especially Chatham, whom he styled "le poète suprême de la parole politique," he was temperamentally disqualified from appreciating their telling raillery. Cicero was his hero.[1] M. Barthou discerns in the portrait he has painted of him the reflection of his own personality: "Ce portrait de Cicéron n'est-il pas, dans ses traits essentiels, celui de Lamartine?"[2] Most students of the great poet-orator's career will not hesitate to endorse this surmise. Lamartine's parliamentary eloquence was characterized by extreme courtesy. When he contradicted his antagonist his dissent was clothed in terms of the most exquisite politeness. Somewhat verbose, the development of his argument was gradual; his natural dignity forbade explosions of anger or impulsive retort. But this moderation was more apparent than real, for, although never passionate or violent, he could, on occasion, crush his opponent beneath the sheer weight of serried phrases; bewildering him in the mazes of many-sided points of view, and carrying his hearers with him by the fascination of his elocution. As some one has very significantly remarked: "Il agissait sur son auditoire par succession régulière d'idées et de sentiments, non par déduction géométrique."

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[1] Cf. *Trois mois au pouvoir*, Addresses on April 16.

[2] *La politique allemande*, p. 134.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 324.

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[1] Cf. *Cours de littérature*, vol. XI, Entretien LXII.

[2] *Lamartine orateur*, p. 324.

CHAPTER XLVII

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

EFFECTIVE as their victory had been, the Provisional Government realized the necessity of consolidating their authority in the eyes of France and of Europe by a display of the martial forces at their disposal. The desire for a demonstration of loyalty would appear to have been reciprocal. The National Guard, the battalions of the Garde Mobile, and the regulars were one and all eager to prove their fidelity, and thereby confound the subversive elements recent events had temporarily cowed. The "Revue de la Fraternité," as the parade was styled, fixed for April 21, was undertaken in this spirit.[1]

Early in the morning the members of the Government ranged themselves on the stand erected at the foot of the Arc de Triomphe, and the impressive march past began. Fourteen hours were not sufficient, says Lamartine, to allow the prodigious tide of soldiers and civic delegations to file past. The enthusiasm, according to the same writer, amounted to delirium, and to Lamartine was addressed the lion's share of applause and vivas which rang out from the three hundred and fifty thousand throats of the multitude which did homage to the hero of the day.[2] There could be no question of the personal popularity he enjoyed, in spite of Lord Normanby's impression that the reception of his colleagues had been "very cold." [3] Yet even the cautious British Ambassador notes that upon the whole "the result ought to inspire confidence in the maintenance of order, if the majority of the Provisional

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[1] Cf. Lamartine, *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 334.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 338.

[3] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 335.

Government know how to avail themselves of the advantages which the existing disposition of the great body of the population seems to place at their disposal." Lamartine was fully alive to the advantages as well as the perils of the situation, knowing as he did that danger lurked as much within the bosom of the Council as in the street.

His fears were, indeed, well grounded. The minority in face of their recent discomfiture sought every means of regaining popularity by the enactment of radical measures calculated to appease the malcontents in the clubs. Decrees were often obtained only after stormy scenes and the threats of the minority to resign should their revolutionary measures be rejected. This was the case when, contrary to their better judgment, the Government yielded to exorbitant taxation of the rich, amounting almost to sumptuary laws; wholesale dismissals from the magistracy, and the forced resignations of sixty-five generals and numerous officers. The adoption of the red flag was even mooted afresh.[1]

Measures for the safety of the Government, minority as well as majority, were not forgotten. Among such must be reckoned the decree ordering the arrest of Blanqui, who, it was rumoured, was plotting mischief. Lamartine alone, and with considerable warmth, defended that arch-conspirator, arguing that to make a martyr of the revolutionist would be a political blunder. But when Caussidière announced that he possessed irrefutable evidence that Blanqui purposed making an attack on the Hôtel de Ville and the Prefecture, his arrest was decided on. Even then Lamartine and Albert refused to sign the warrant. As a matter of fact it was never executed, and Lamartine subsequently prevailed with Ledru-Rollin for its destruction.[1]

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[1] Cf. Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 286, and *Commission d'enquête*, vol. I, p. 220, Déposition Arago; also Regnault, *Histoire du gouvernement provisoire*, p. 301.

It will be remembered that on February 28, Mr. Rush, the American Minister, had unofficially assured Lamartine of the undoubted sympathy of his Government with the new order in France. Not until April 26, however, was Mr. Rush in possession of despatches from home instructing him to congratulate and recognize the new French Republic officially.[2] On this occasion Lamartine expressed himself very warmly, extolling the traditional friendship which bound together the two countries, and terminating his impassioned harangue with the words: "Tout Français a pour les Américains le cœur de Lafayette." [3] Doubt has been cast on Lamartine's personal sympathy with the excessively democratic institutions in the United States. "America," he wrote at a later date, "has as yet only the superiority of youth. Her genius, if one different from that inherited from old Europe, her mother, be vouchsafed her, is as yet only budding. It is impossible to foretell what the fruit will be." [4] A few years later, in 1865, during the War of Secession, analyzing the work of the naturalist Audubon, he says: "America contains the germ of a great people: one must be careful not to stifle the germ in speaking too roughly of her acts of yesterday and to-day. We are not partisans of her civilization, which we regard as too elementary and too brutal." [5] And he goes on to question the purity of the Revolution, undertaken, in his estimation, in a "venal cause."[6] In a moment of extreme irritation he had even dubbed the United States "un peuple sans ancêtres sur un continent sans passé." [1] Politically speaking, the civilization of the United States held his admiration, although at times his criticisms were harsh and unjust. He recognized that fundamentally the principles underlying the American and French Revolutions were identical: the revolt against tyranny and arbitrary fiscal impositions and social injustice. As a consequence, logically Lamartine could not, and did not, refuse to admit the sublimity of the philosophy which had guided a Washington. The political genius underlying the glory of the great Liberator did not escape him and inspired him with genuine respect. But he failed at times to detect beneath democratic egotism the great humanitarian aims of the generous civilization of the New World.

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[1] Caussidière, *Mémoires*, vol. II, p. 61; also Ledru-Rollin's evidence before High Court on March 19, 1849.

[2] Archives, Department of State, Washington.

[3] *La France parlementaire*, vol. V, p. 247.

[4] *Cours de littérature*, vol. III, p. 251.

[5] *Ibid.*, vol. XX, p. 82.

[6] *Ibid.*; cf. also vol. XII, p. 19, and *Mémoires politiques*, vol. II, p. 13.

Judging by contemporaneous French records, private and official, there would appear to be but little foundation for the assertion, made by an American sojourning in Paris, that Mr. Rush's welcome to the New Republic "was met with cold and partial acknowledgement on the part of the French Government." [2] Mr. Mitchell states that: "Our Minister, with his congressional resolutions, was received at the Hôtel de Ville as a debtor who comes to liquidate an old-standing account." When compared with the documents preserved in the State Department in Washington this view of the situation is manifestly an exaggeration. Yet Mr. Mitchell's psychology was not wholly at fault when he contended that: "This new Republic had assumed to itself a far higher character than belonged to our own. It was initiative — as its makers hoped — to a higher progress, and a more thorough reform than was to be found in any Western wilderness; as much higher as French vanity is disposed to rate French political philosophy above all other. Deeper questions were submitted to their philosophic analysis. Humanity was reduced to codification; and the teachers affected to disregard that humble effort of our own, which was successful, only for the poor reason that it was practical. A merely judicious and safe government, having for its basis popular representation, was by no means the end of their wishes. New systems of labour, State finance of criminal policy, and a reduction of commonest affairs of life to a nice, philosophic, pseudo-Christian organization, was the dream as much of Lamartine, as of Louis Blanc, or Raspail." [1]

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[1] *Cours de littérature*, vol. III, p. 251. The phrase reminds one of Chateaubriand's, who in the *Natchez*, which Lamartine had certainly read, speaks contemptuously of "cette société sans aïeux et sans souvenirs." Cf. Chateaubriand, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. VII, p. 18 (edition of 1832).

[2] Donald Grant Mitchell ("Ik Marvel"), *The Battle Summer*, p. 117.

Here the American critic touches the real issue. It was the transcendentalism of Lamartine's political philosophy which constituted its lack of practical power when brought face to face with the everyday, rough-and-tumble brutalities of a raw and untrained democracy.

It was probably Lamartine's own words, in his reply to Mr. Rush on April 26, which led Mr. Mitchell to believe that the American Minister was received "as a debtor who comes to liquidate an old-standing account." Lamartine recalled the fact that France had been the first to recognize the young American Republic, and dwelt on the struggle which had attended the birth of Democracy in the New World. "In accordance with the just decree of Providence, it behooved the American Republic," he argued, "to be the first to give recognition to the new French Republic, to affix, so to speak, her sign-manual to the birth certificate of French Democracy in Europe." "This signature, Mr. Minister," he added, "will bring us luck." [2] The words were cordial, the sentiment gracefully expressed. Diplomatically speaking, the incident had its undoubted value. But from the standpoint of international European politics the purely sentimental moral support of the United States was in reality a negligible quantity, welcome as it might be to the men struggling to keep together the conflicting elements of the government they had founded on the shifting sands of an unripe democracy.

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[1] Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

[2] *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 247.

Although Lamartine termed the manifestation of April 16 "un symptôme accidentel,"[1] its purport was symptomatic of far more deeply rooted political and social revolt than his optimism was willing to admit. He had stated to Lord Normanby the belief that the popular acclamations attending the review of April 21 "had secured the permanent destinies of the country";[2] by which he meant, of course, the Republic. This confidence was not shared either by his interlocutor or by the vast majority of political observers, who discerned in the heterogeneous composition of the forthcoming National Assembly a hot-bed of dissentient and reactionary intrigues. Symptoms of these reactionary tendencies became apparent as preparations for the elections progressed. Ledru-Rollin's agents, disseminated throughout the provinces, had undertaken the schooling of peasants and small tradesfolk in rural and urban districts. Many believed their influence would be decisive. The contrary was the case. The great mass of voters, unaccustomed to the franchise, but canny where their material interests were at stake, in spite of republican leanings showed but scant appreciation for the principles so noisily proclaimed in the metropolis. With few exceptions but two names really counted, those of Lamartine and Ledru-Rollin. The latter represented to provincial voters a sectarian and exclusive Republic, Jacobin, social-

[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 293.

[2] Cf. Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 340.

istic, in a word, "red." The former, on the contrary, stood for the antithesis of the political circulars of the Luxembourg and of Louis Blanc's radicalism.[1] It was to this standard that the majority of provincial electors eventually flocked. As Lord Normanby expressed it, the elections were generally in favour of men of every shade of opinion inclined to check the ultra-revolutionary movement, "though almost every one returned is, *for the present*, professedly a Republican." [2]

In Paris, Lamartine headed the list of successful candidates with a total of 259,800 ballots. Ledru-Rollin's name was twenty-fourth (131,587 votes), and Louis Blanc's twenty-seventh (120,140). Moreover, ten electoral colleges had proclaimed Lamartine their representative, the total aggregating 1,600,000 votes.[3] When Marrast informed the poet-statesman of this unprecedented triumph, Lamartine, pushing aside the dog which lay upon his lap, sprang to his feet, exclaiming: "I am head and shoulders greater than Alexander or Cæsar!" adding reflectively, "At least they say so." [4] But those who knew realized that the triumph was less due to the man than to the principles he incarnated. In other words, it was to the party of the "National," the champion of moderation, and the irreconcilable foe of the clubs and of socialism, that the voters carried their homage. "Le 27 avril est l'apogée de la popularité de Lamartine," writes Quentin-Bauchart,[5] and from that hour may be traced the decline and fall of the marvellous influence he had wielded. The psychology of popularity is as inscrutable as are the decrees of Providence. In his "Lettre aux Dix Départements," dated August 25, 1848, Lamartine sadly complains that the popularity which had upheld him, "without cause, had been withdrawn without a motive."[1] But is this assertion substantially correct?

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[1] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 308; also Regnault, *op. cit.*, p. 358. X. Doudan (*Mélanges et lettres*, vol. II, p. 159) styles Blanc "The Tom-Thumb of Terror."

[2] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 348.

[3] The departments proclaiming Lamartine were: Bouches du Rhône, Côtes d'Or, Dordogne, Finistère, Gironde, Ille et Vilaine, Nord, Saône et Loire, Seine, Seine inférieure.

[4] Regnault, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

[5] *Op. cit.* (*La politique intérieure*), p. 310.

Before analyzing Lamartine's refutation of the accusations which had been levelled against him, and which he specifically recognizes as the basis of this withdrawal of popular confidence, it will be necessary to relate as succinctly as possible the events on and after the 4th of May, the date on which the National Assembly met in Paris. Opinions differ as to the unanimity and spontaneity of the reception accorded the Provisional Government when its members entered the Chamber on May 4. But there is little question but that this impressive ceremony still found Lamartine at the zenith of his national and international prestige. The stealthy processes which were to undermine and destroy his political repute were as yet hidden from the general public. Lord Normanby, who assisted at the ceremony, states that "the Provisional Government, as a body, were coldly received within the Chamber. 'Vive la République' was vociferously shouted by a portion of the members, and was loudly echoed from the tribunes." [2] Lamartine himself states that the nine hundred deputies, on the entrance of the members of the Provisional Government, sprang to their feet, and that "an immense cry of 'Vive la République' demonstrated that France had ratified and adopted unanimously the principles of February." [3] The truth probably lies betwixt and between. Unquestionably many of the deputies who shouted their approval of the Republic did so, not from conviction as to the blessings, or even the stability, of the new régime, but because they had adopted the popular form of government in default of one more in harmony with their personal sentiments. In such a medley of political aspirations this was inevitable.

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[1] Opening phrase of his letter.

[2] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 360.

[3] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 317; cf. also Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

After listening with rapt attention to the short address of the venerable President, Dupont de l'Eure, the whole Assembly, surrounding the members of the Provisional Government, thronged on to the peristyle of the Palais Bourbon, to receive the thundering applause of the vast multitude assembled on the square, the bridge, and adjacent streets. Here there could be no mistake as to the enthusiasm elicited by the appearance of the men who had risked life and popularity in the exercise of their often thankless task, during the last three months. As usual, to Lamartine went the lion's share of the intoxicating public applause. Already, before the short session within the Chamber, his advent had been the signal for a popular outburst of frantic cheering. Normanby somewhat maliciously relates a colloquy which took place on the following day. "There is a simple candour, sometimes, in Lamartine's self-esteem which is peculiar and not without its charm," writes the Ambassador. "I met him yesterday in one of the lobbies of the House of Assembly, and he asked me whether I had seen their procession and arrival at the Chamber. I said not; that I had been already in the tribune. He then said, 'Oh! it was most satisfactory! Magnificent! Such universal cries of "Vive Lamartine!" Not so many of "Vive la République!" Not enough!' And yet he had been struck naturally with the enthusiasm of his own reception." [1] A few days later the usually circumspect diplomatist gives vent in the pages of his "Journal" to decidedly acrimonious criticism. "I see the English newspapers continue to make a great hero of Lamartine. I need not say it is from no want of personal partiality, that I cannot quite share their feeling; I have been rather too much behind the scenes. He has excellent sentiments, but no steady principles; and no one can have so much vanity without, in his place, having some jealousy in his composition; and at this moment his rising jealousy is against what he calls the 'côté droit' of Government, a designation which we have lived to hear applied to the 'coterie' of the 'National.' . . . Lamartine does not wish to separate himself from the violent party, because he hopes to make himself necessary to the others by appearing to act as a moderator; but, by the speech he delivered yesterday, it seems that he is likely to get too deep in democratic excesses, and thus soon lose all this applause from 'les honnêtes gens,' with whom his popularity depends upon his being considered as ready to rid them of the others." [1]

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[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 362.

The speech to which Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador takes exception was that delivered by Lamartine, in the place of Dupont de l'Eure, before the National Assembly on May 6, 1848.[2] The speaker undoubtedly draws a more politic than strictly veracious picture of the "dissensions" (a more euphonious term than "treacheries") which had threatened to tear asunder the Provisional Government. His efforts to gloss over such episodes as those of the red flag, and the manifestations organized by the minority in order to cow their colleagues, did honour to his loyalty, but could deceive none of his hearers. If he covers with the flowers of his rhetoric the victorious mob (he uses the more dignified substantive, "People") which had overturned the Throne, it was because he presented himself as the representative of that populace whose interests he had whole-heartedly espoused. There is no sign of truckling to the base passions of the "ultras," no crude indication of the "democratic excesses" the English Ambassador affects to discern. "Ce fut un discours de concorde, d'union et d'apaisement," opines M. Quentin-Bauchart;[1] and with this verdict most critics will agree, whatever reservations they may make *in petto*, as to the political wisdom of Lamartine's generosity.

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[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 366.

[2] Not May 7, as Lamartine erroneously states in the *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 318.

Yet Lord Normanby's insight was not wholly at fault. Lamartine spoke for his colleagues: the responsibilities were collective, not individual. He must have recognized that he was treading the borderland which separated "les honnêtes gens" from the politicians who sought to entrap him in their net: that excessive zeal in the defence of those who had professed and practised ultra-revolutionary theories must inevitably alienate the conservative elements on which he counted for the maintenance of the Republic. His own countrymen have judged harshly the overweening self-confidence (vanity, Normanby calls it) which led him to believe himself indispensable to all parties, and, as such, master of the situation. "Intoxicated by his prodigious success in the elections," writes Quentin-Bauchart, "he firmly believed that it depended only on himself to have the dictatorship awarded him, and that not only would the dignity be uncontested, but be spontaneously offered him."[2] The accuracy of this contention is vouched for by Lamartine's own words. In his "Histoire de la révolution de 1848" (written in the third person), he textually acknowledges the assurance he entertained. "He could not hide from himself that his popularity in Paris amounted to passion, . . . that the ten elections which bestowed on him almost the title of universal representative, that the seven or eight million votes which were at his service throughout the length and breadth of the Republic, and lastly the support of six or seven hundred deputies out of nine hundred, designated, nay imposed, him as the choice of the Assembly 'comme l'homme de la circonstance et comme le chef unique et prédestiné du pouvoir.'"[1] Fully cognizant of the perils of the situation he believed to be within his grasp, Lamartine felt no hesitancy as to the personal aptitudes he possessed to fill the tremendous rôle.

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[1] *Lamartine*, p. 312.

[2] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 315.

At the same time a careful reading of the arguments he advances for and against energetic and decisive action on his part (arguments which are numerous in the pages of his contemporaneous writings)[2] seems to indicate certain misgivings as to the possibility of dispensing with the support of the radical party, should he attain his ends. Nor was this disinclination to throw in his lot fairly and squarely with the elements constituting Ledru-Rollin's political faction the only deterrent. Other considerations had their weight: prudential considerations of honour, and the possible verdict of History, mingled with an ill-concealed scepticism as to the profundity of the republican sentiment in France. Over these he pondered during the "three or four sleepless nights" he spent "alone with his conscience, deliberating the future."[3]

Lamartine, urged by Dupont de l'Eure, had sketched out a plan for a constitution which he desired to submit to the Assembly. His original idea called for a triumvirate whose members should represent "the three elements on which power is founded: impulsion, resistance, moderation"; and who should assume their functions for a period of three years, exercising a restrictive influence over the inevitably impulsive tendencies of the raw materials constituting the Assembly.[1] Lamartine has not confided to posterity the names of the colleagues he would have selected had this system been adopted, but undoubtedly he had Ledru-Rollin in mind as one of them. Perhaps Marrast would have been the other, as a counterpoise, and the representative of the party of the "National." The rôle of Lamartine was to be that of a Cromwell should the necessity arise; but of a Cromwell whose actions would be purely conciliatory, far removed from the violences of his regicide prototype.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 403.

[2] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, *Mémoires politiques*, and *Lettre aux dix départements*, etc.

[3] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 405.

Authoritative critics, such as Charles de Mazade, believe that had Lamartine resolutely and unflinchingly seized the opportunity which offered, and with firm hand assumed the dictatorship, thrusting aside all subversive elements, the Republic would have been securely, perhaps permanently, established. There is no doubt that the country at large would have upheld the action of "le premier citoyen de France."[2] The army, the moderates, and conservative republicans would have welcomed the guarantee his moral personality offered as a safeguard at home and abroad. Although this is substantially true, the acceptance of the hypothesis is inadmissible, since it presupposes that Lamartine was not Lamartine. In the course of this study it has been made clearly manifest that final, concrete, and imperious action was wholly foreign to his temperament. In an emergency, such as the rejection of the red flag, or the refusal of his signature to the decree concerning the State organization of labour, he might, and did, take a firm stand, and abide by his decision at all costs. But however high personal ambition may have soared, however immeasurable his vanity and self-confidence, he was physically and mentally incapable of assuming the rôle of a Bonaparte. A diplomatist rather than a statesman, in the more uncompromising and brutal sense of the term, it was through conciliation that he sought to attain his ends. As a consequence, he turned again in this essentially psychological crisis to Ledru-Rollin and others of his ilk. The impulsion, generous as it unquestionably was, proved fatal. The all-powerful party of the "National," Marrast, Marie, Garnier-Pagès, and many other influential "moderates," could not overlook or forgive an alliance, or at least a compliance, with the author of the electional "circulars," whose socialistic tendencies were abhorrent to them. In the eyes of these men Lamartine was almost a traitor. "They saw in him an unscrupulous politician, who had in view only his personal interests and the desire to occupy the most prominent place, ready to sacrifice them first of all in favour of his ambitions and his popularity." [1] All sorts of rumours were afloat as to the nature of his relations with Caussidière, Sobrier, and even Blanqui.

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[1] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 344.

[2] Cf. Mazade, *Lamartine*, p. 177; cf. also Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

Nevertheless, when on May 4 he entered the National Assembly his popularity and prestige were still, as has been said, in their zenith, and it is possible that even the party of the "National" might have been placated had Lamartine then and there renounced all connection with the obnoxious elements they dreaded. But he realized the radical measures his assumption of power must entail. As he himself said: "Il m'aurait fallu pour cela deux échafauds: l'un à droite pour Montalembert, et l'autre à gauche pour Blanqui," meaning, of course, that he could only have governed successfully by suppressing the royalists and the extreme socialists. Lamartine refers to the Revolution of July as having "aborted before term," and to the dynasty it set up as "a republican royalty." Yet in 1830 he had accepted this compromise as vastly preferable to a frankly democratic system, knowing his countrymen still unripe for so radical a change. Writing to Virieu from Paris, on September 21, 1830, he had, indeed, expressed his terror of a possible republic such as the clubs desired: "Je te la refuserai tant que je pourrai," he assures his friend.[1] Circumstances alter cases. Eighteen years of perpetual disappointment had proved the fallacy of the paradox on which the July Monarchy had been founded. In France at least the systems were incompatible. Nor was monarchical Europe willing to accept on a footing of equality the usurper who rules by virtue of an electorate instead of by right divine. Hence the total lack of "political intimacy," the absence of which Lamartine held up as a grief against the late régime. But when considering this arraignment the fact should not be lost sight of that Lamartine was addressing a Republican Chamber, owing its election to universal suffrage. The manifest exaggerations were dictated by that sentimentalism, so to speak, inseparable from outbursts of popular eloquence. Witness such phrases as: "Sous la République c'est le principe démocratique et fraternel qui devient la véritable frontière de la France." Or again: "The Republic understood at once the new policy which philosophy, humanity, the need of the century, were to inaugurate at last through the instrumentality of our country among the nations: I ask for no better proof that Democracy is of divine inspiration, and that it will triumph in Europe as rapidly and as gloriously as it has triumphed in Paris."[2] Instead of being smothered by the reactionary governments of Europe, France, Lamartine assures his hearers, now marches in the van of eighty-eight millions of confederates and friends, including Italy, Switzerland,

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[1] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DXX. [2] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 269.

and those peoples of Germany whose emancipation had been accomplished by popular uprisings since the overthrow of the July Monarchy.

"I think," noted Lord Normanby, "even the Assembly considered M. Lamartine's manifesto as imprudent, because when one member moved that it should not only be circulated in the country, but communicated to foreign Powers, there was a very general feeling against the proposition."[1] The imputation attributed by Normanby to the report would appear excessive. The retrospective grievances to which Lamartine alluded were, indeed, matters of history: the principles laid down in the "Manifesto to Europe" had been observed in the spirit as well as in the letter. France sought no territorial aggrandizement; no undue pressure, moral or physical, had been exerted in order to bring her neighbours into the democratic fold. On the contrary, Lamartine had ever sought to restrain the too zealous efforts of proselytizers who risked embroiling their country abroad. His instructions to De Circourt at Berlin were imbued with wise counsels of moderation, insisting upon the right of France to work out her own salvation, but recognizing the freedom of other European States to settle their domestic problems as they might see fit.[2]

But when Lamartine took his seat after the delivery of the report, the subtle antagonism which he was to confront in the Assembly was already discernible. Despite his vanity and self-confidence, it is probable that he read the signs aright. Yet he was determined to stand by the colleagues chance and the voice of the people had given him in February, even at the cost of his own popularity. The National Assembly, the aim of his incessant endeavour during the stormy weeks of the Provisional Government, was now a *fait accompli.* But did this heterogeneous mass of conflicting political sentiments necessarily guarantee the Republic? A false step, a suspicion even, might precipitate the country into the chaos of anarchism. Was he, Lamartine, the stumbling-block? That he believed he was is apparent from his decision. "Il faut me perdre et sauver l'Assemblée nationale," he cried. And, when his friends urged him to assume the dictatorship, he pointed out to them the peril such an act would involve, adding: "Je m'engloutis, mais je vous sauve." [1]

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[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 373; cf. also Lamartine, *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 402, who maintains that his speech was universally applauded and that it was printed and sent to foreign Powers.

[2] Cf. Georges Bourgin, *Souvenirs d'une mission à Berlin*, vol. II, *passim*.

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[1] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 412.

CHAPTER XLVIII

THE WANE OF HIS INFLUENCE

Louis Blanc, while recognizing, at times dazzled by, the genius of Lamartine, correctly summed up the measure of his political frailty. In spite of the astounding electoral success of his rival, the popular agitator quickly realized the wane of his influence, once the National Assembly had met. The tribute Blanc pays to Lamartine, in the pages of his "Histoire de la révolution de 1848," is impregnated with a retrospective jealousy mingled with grudging admiration for his undoubted merit. He seeks to fathom and to explain the ascendancy of Lamartine's political action by the juxtaposition of his vanity and the splendour of his imagination. If we are to believe him, Lamartine lived perpetually in a dream, cradled by the sense of his own immensely superior intellectual advantages. "Endowed with a prodigious power of illusion, he suddenly imagined that he had given to France this Republic which he had so long judged chimerical, and which he had combated: dragged along by the movement, he believed he had guided it, and thought it would be easy for him to dominate it."[1]

The criticism is not devoid of acumen, as even the most ardent admirer of Lamartine will admit. Nor does Blanc deny the absolute sincerity which prompted the generous effort for reconciliation through the medium of his personal seduction. Yet he insinuates: "Nos meilleurs sentiments recèlent de si imperceptibles sophismes et le cœur humain est si habile à se tromper lui-même," — a poisoned shaft rendering questionable the sincerity of the writer's measured praise. Although not taxing Lamartine directly with his exclusion from the Executive Commission, it is apparent that Blanc resents his former colleague's passive acceptance of the omission.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 63.

As a matter of fact, Lamartine's influence had been largely instrumental in dictating the National Assembly's choice of the five members who composed the Executive Commission, elected to replace the Provisional Government until such time as a permanent form of constitutional administration should have been adopted. But this influence had been exerted, not to the exclusion of any of his late colleagues, but for the maintenance of Ledru-Rollin in any combination it might be decided to support. In his speech of May 9 all his efforts had been directed to this end. If the national representatives bowed before the will of the still popular statesman, they were speedily to demonstrate the secret resentment, not to say mistrust, they experienced. On the morrow Lamartine's name stood fourth on the list, with 643 ballots in his favour, as against 725 for Arago, 715 for Garnier-Pagès, and 702 for Marie. His protégé, Ledru-Rollin, obtained but 458. Contrasted with his fabulous triumph at the polls on April 28, Lamartine's fall from grace was indeed significant. In his "Mémoires politiques" he sorrowfully acknowledges that he had lost the confidence of a large portion of the National Assembly "through the sacrifice he made of his popularity and his ambition," and that he was punished because of his refusal to subscribe to "the impatience and blindness" of his country.[1] The phrase is obscure, but there can be no doubt as to his apprehension concerning the fate in store for the Republic should Ledru-Rollin and his very considerable following be ignored in the composition of the Executive Commission.[1] Lord Normanby credited Lamartine with "some unaccountable impulse, either of supposed chivalry, or of momentary weakness"; [2] but there is reason for the belief that his motive was deeper-rooted.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 360.

The personal aims which M. Maurice Barrès attributes to the hero of the Hôtel de Ville must appear to all impartial students as supremely unfair. "Lamartine attendait de la démocratie un plaisir sublime, la joie de se faire porter sur un élément qui pouvait l'engloutir. Cet aristocrate espérait de séduire les vagues et de s'élever sur elles au plus haut point de la gloire." And he goes on to compare him to the gambler to whom the excitement of the game he plays is at once the means and the end.[3] This is clearly unjust. His motives were pure, and his loyalty to his former colleague was an act of sublime immolation of personal ambitions on the altar of patriotism. Yet his persistence in the effort to retain his popularity is disconcerting to his most ardent admirers to-day, and was doubly suspicious to his contemporaries. Doubtless, in his youth, Lamartine had been fed on the substantial morality of Chastellux's then popular treatise "De la Félicité publique" — a work our own time would do well to ponder. Apparent in his political writings and speeches, the idealism of the Marquis's precepts coincided with his own deep-rooted horror of internecine strife. But then why not accept the advice of many candid friends, and retire from the political stage with the halo of his prodigious popularity not only unblemished, but immeasurably enhanced? He himself realized the wane of his popularity, and the arguments he advances in extenuation of his action are unconvincing; nay, even lend colour to the insinuations of his foes.[1] Nevertheless, the unquestionably generous impulse which hastened his fall, when judged in the light of his political career, should mitigate in his favour and shield him from unduly harsh criticism.

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[1] Cf. Lamartine, *Lettre aux dix départements;* also C. de Freycinet (*Souvenirs*, vol. I, p. 36), an eye-witness of the events described, who writes: "Ledru-Rollin and his principal assistant, Jules Favre, through their injudicious intervention, did more harm to the Republic than all the collective hostile elements." The same writer maintains that the names of Lamartine, Garnier-Pagès, Marie, and Ledru-Rollin were essential in the composition of the Executive Commission. He commends without restriction Lamartine's insistence concerning Ledru-Rollin, qualifying it, "un acte de haute politique," and blames the reactionary Assembly for the expiation its author was made to suffer. *Op. cit.*, p. 37.

[2] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 370.

[3] *L'Abdication du poète*, p. 43.

Condemned to play a subordinate rôle in the Executive Commission, Lamartine would even appear to have shared, momentarily at least, the lassitude which followed on the prolonged tension he and his colleagues had been under since February. He made no effort to create for himself a following in the Assembly. Nor did he take serious steps to combat the campaign of depopularization his foes had undertaken. The attitude which he had adopted towards the Polish agitators and refugees, who sought to embroil the Provisional Government with Prussia and Austria, was now actively exploited to discredit him, and was used as a lever not only to excite public opinion against him personally, but to create popular discontent with the National Assembly he had laboured so persistently to convoke. To those who came to him for political advice, he responded evasively that "all would be well"; and he referred those who sought his opinions on the projected constitution to Béranger and Lamennais.[2]

Notwithstanding this apparent apathy he continued to exercise an influence which, if it was grudgingly accepted, was real. Had a statesman of the first order been available, it is highly probable that the floating elements of the Assembly could have been coördinated at the outset, and a master-builder could have moulded the material into a sound and stable monument. Alas! no such leader was forthcoming; and the dissolvent tactics of the ultra-revolutionists, whom the vaunted application of universal suffrage had served not a whit, sapped the vitality of the hermaphroditic assemblage. Neither Thiers nor Molé had been elected, and Odilon Barrot, although enjoying consideration, was not recognized as an efficient leader. Lamartine, possessed though he was of many of the qualities which go to make a statesman, was, as has been seen, woefully lacking in that "unscrupulousness" which the successful leader of men must perforce exercise in a crisis. His was the velvet glove, indeed: but the suave envelope concealed no iron fist. The 15th of May was to make manifest the weakness of his policy of general reconciliation and the fallacy of his attempts at intercession with the leaders of subversive factions. On the one hand, he was to be accused of association with the promoters of the movement, in league with Ledru-Rollin for the establishment of a demagogical dictatorship; on the other, to face the assertion that, in complicity with Marrast, he had prepared a trap for the revolutionists.

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[1] Cf. *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 357.

[2] Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 5, note. "Confiant toujours, oublieux, plein de sérénité, il attendait tout du temps et de son étoile."

It seems impossible to accept unreservedly M. Quentin-Bauchart's contention that Lamartine's conduct during the demonstration proves that he was taken by surprise.[1] Lord Normanby, greatly concerned over the public rumours, made several attempts to speak with him on May 14, but Lamartine was almost incessantly closeted with his colleagues. The gravity of the impending popular demonstration was fully appreciated by the man in the street, and it is consequently inadmissible that those in authority were unaware of its import. "On the one side," wrote Normanby, "it was said that the demonstration on behalf of Poland to-morrow would be so powerful that neither the Assembly nor the Government could resist it; on the other side, it was assumed, that as every one to be entrusted with the execution of the national will must see how impossible it would be to give practical effect to it in that quarter, the Government would endeavour to divert the populace from that demand (immediate war with Prussia and Austria), by announcing that they were going to take possession of Savoy." [1] That such an alternative was ever seriously considered by the Executive Commission is, however, not proved, and the searching enquiries instigated at a later date give no evidence in support of the allegation, which the British Ambassador rightly stigmatizes as a "monstrous pretension." War was the last calamity Lamartine, or any of his colleagues, was prepared to face. What Daniel Stern terms the "tolérance" [2] of Lamartine must be attributed to his inveterate optimism, if not to his undiminished confidence in the magic of his eloquence when face to face with a turbulent mob.

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[1] *Op. cit.* (*La politique intérieure*), p. 328.

As early as April 3, the revolutionary newspapers and club organs had warned their readers that the national representatives must be jealously watched by the people of Paris, and that in case of necessity their mandate should be revoked by this self-constituted tribunal.[3] During the month which had intervened these menaces had been pertinaciously repeated, and the question of intervention in favour of Poland made a live issue. It is difficult in our day to grasp the full import of what must appear a purely sentimental problem. Yet it will be remembered that since the Revolution of July, 1830, every year the Address of the Crown contained reference to

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[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 382. [2] *Op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 19.

[3] Cf. *L'Atelier* and *Commune de Paris*, both of that date.

Poland, signifying the determination of Parliament not to allow the matter to lapse. Platonic as such reference undoubtedly was, it contained the germ of a popular ideal; indistinct and vague, yet dangerously persistent.

Agitation in favour of the Poles, fomented by the clubs in order to embarrass the Government and Assembly, began on May 13. Marrast, Mayor of Paris, and Caussidière, the Prefect of Police, had, however, given assurances that no serious disturbances were to be feared. Nevertheless, General Courtais, who was in command, took certain precautionary measures in the precincts of the Palais Bourbon for the protection of the national representatives. Rumours concerning the trustworthiness of Caussidière had indeed provoked a half-hearted proposal for the arrest of the Prefect of Police, but Lamartine promptly quashed the motion, making himself personally responsible for his fidelity.[1] At noon on the 15th, accompanied by Ledru-Rollin, Lamartine proceeded to the Legislative Chamber, and, anticipating no trouble, took his seat. As he was about to reply to an interpellation concerning the Government's policy in Italy, he was informed of the arrival in the Place de la Concorde, opposite the bridge leading to the Chamber, of an immense column of people demanding the right to impose their petition upon the National Representatives. General Courtais essayed at first to parley, and then meekly sent word to Lamartine, asking his authority to allow the manifestants to cross the bridge. This Lamartine positively refused to sanction, but eventually agreed that a deputation of twenty-five be permitted to present their petition. Before this concession had been communicated, however, the angry attitude of the mob caused Courtais to waver. Fearing bloodshed, it is asserted, the General issued the order to his men to sheathe their arms, and the populace, realizing that no serious resistance would be opposed to them, rushed the helpless troopers, and began to storm the iron railings which protected the Chamber.

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[1] Cf. J. Favre, *Rapport de la commission d'enquête*, vol. I, p. 279.

Hastily leaving the rostrum, Lamartine, Ledru-Rollin at his side, went forth to meet the invading tide, and once again to quell the angry passions of the plebs with the magic of his eloquence. Ledru-Rollin was greeted with applause: Lamartine with hisses. "Vive la Pologne! A bas Lamartine!" thundered the furious mob. "Tout est perdu," cried the hero of the Hôtel de Ville when he was roughly pushed aside by the assailants struggling to gain entrance into the chamber, vociferating: "Down with Lamartine! He is a traitor!" Determined to sell his life dearly, Lamartine opposed a desperate resistance to those who sought to invade the hemicycle. Face to face with Albert, his colleague in the Provisional Government, he repulsed his efforts to cross the threshold, crying: "You shall not pass: give me your petition and I will myself lay it on the table." But Albert sneeringly replied: "Citizen Lamartine, you may be a great poet, but as statesman you have not our confidence. It is long enough now that you pay us with poetry and fine phrases: the people at present demand something more. The people insist on making themselves heard personally in the National Assembly."[1] Stunned, but intrepid, Lamartine repeated that only over his prostrate body should the mob gain access to the Chamber: but jeers and insults met his expostulations, and he soon recognized the helplessness of his position. Escaping from the hands of those who sought to do him violence, he regained his seat, awaiting further developments and still hoping that aid would be forthcoming to stem the invasion. Accustomed as he was to "ride the whirlwind and direct the storm," appeasing physical force, as Lord Normanby puts it, by the matchless power of speech, Lamartine found himself disconcerted by the suddenness of the recoil of his popularity. But he was not granted any prolonged period for reflection, as the irruption of the mob was practically simultaneous with his return to the Chamber.

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[1] Stern (*op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 31) mentions Laviron as addressing these words to Lamartine, but Lamartine himself attributes them to Albert.

Swarming like locusts, men in blouses or in shirt-sleeves clambered into the public galleries and swung themselves to the floor below. No attempt was made to conceal the bayonets or knives with which most of them were armed, or the red flag which betrayed the real character of the manifestation.[1] A scene of indescribable confusion followed, as the doors leading from the corridors directly to the floor of the House were burst open and the flood of the insurgents poured in. Intoxicated with the victory, the leaders took the rostrum by assault, struggling one with another, their mouthings inaudible amid the ear-splitting tumult. Louis Blanc, Barbès, Raspail, Blanqui, and a host of less well-known agitators, thronged around the President's chair, shutting him off from all communication with those outside, and preventing any appeal to the Garde Nationale, whose battalions stood awaiting orders in the courtyards of the Palais Bourbon. Calm and dignified, the eight hundred-odd representatives kept their seats, refusing to believe that aid would not be immediately forthcoming and the floor be cleared.

Meanwhile Lamartine again left the hall, and, mingling with the crowds which thronged the corridors and committee-rooms, harangued the invaders, urging them to retire and cease this shameful violation of the sanctity of the national representation. In vain did he pour out the floods of his rhetoric: none took heed of his persuasive eloquence; only gibes and coarse vituperations met his impassioned appeals. Finally he was dragged by friends across the garden into the half-finished residence of the President. There, barricaded in a room, surrounded by a handful of trusty adherents, he awaited the issue of events. To General Courtais, who came to him for advice, he urged the instant rally of the National Guard, and the deliverance of the besieged Chamber. "If within three hours," remarked Lamartine to his bodyguard, "we don't hear the call to arms sounded across the river, I shall sleep to-night in the prison of Vincennes, or I shall be shot!"[1] Indeed, rumours of the wildest kind were flying about, and the triumph of the irresponsible demagogues seemed assured. In the Chamber, Huber, from the rostrum, had declared, "in the name of the People," that the National Assembly was dissolved. At half-past three the President, Buchez, having been ejected from his chair, word was passed to the chiefs of the insurrection to assemble at the Hôtel de Ville. Believing their victory complete, those remaining in the Chamber began drafting lists for the constitution of a Provisional Government to be proclaimed in the Hôtel de Ville.[2] But Courtais on leaving Lamartine had succeeded in transmitting some incoherent orders to the troops, and the Garde Mobile, acting rather on its own initiative than in obedience to the garbled instructions, hastened to liberate the terrorized representatives. A fearful panic ensued: the crowd, uttering imprecations against what they deemed the base treachery of their leaders, made frantic efforts to escape. By five o'clock the hall was cleared and the session resumed midst cheers for the Republic. When General Courtais, in full uniform, finally appeared, however, he was greeted with hoots, and his sword and epaulettes were torn from him. Rescued after submitting to the insults and violence of the infuriated deputies, branded as a traitor, he was finally smuggled into the library of the House, and there detained under strict surveillance.

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[1] Cf. Normanby (*op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 394), who was an eye-witness to the proceedings, and whose personal narrative is convincing, although it does not tally with that given by Stern, who denies the mob was armed.

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[1] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 436.

[2] Cf. Stern (*op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 37), who gives the fullest and most impartial comprehensive account of the wild scenes enacted. Cf. also Garnier-Pagès, *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. IX, *passim*.

Order having been restored, the deliberations were about to begin when the door was flung open, and Lamartine, followed by Ledru-Rollin, made his appearance. Mounting the rostrum he asked the Assembly to tender a vote of thanks in the name of France to the National Guard. His denunciation of the scandalous irruption which had insulted the Assembly was impregnated with singular moderation. It was conciliation he sought rather than avengement. But the closing words of his harangue demonstrated his determination to face the still existing peril and reconquer the prestige of the Government he represented. "At such a moment," he cried, "the place of the Government is not in the Council Chamber: it is in your van, National Guards, in the street, in the midst of the fray; at this juncture the noblest rostrum in the world is the saddle of a horse!" [1] And suiting his actions to his words, he called upon his colleagues on the Executive Commission to follow him to the Hôtel de Ville. Amid frantic applause and the beating of drums, a horse was brought for Lamartine, another found for Ledru-Rollin, and accompanied by a few of the bolder deputies and a vast throng of National Guards, the procession set forth. *En route* a regiment of dragoons and six cannon joined forces, and pushing his way through the sea of human beings which surged in the streets and encumbered the quays, the intrepid leader struggled to reach the Hôtel de Ville, already partially in the hands of the rebel leaders, Barbès and Albert, busily occupied in framing the new Government.

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[1] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 440.

Lamartine, who had assumed command of the expedition, ordered a turning movement, inspired by his reminiscences of the great Revolution, successfully subjecting the insurgents to a cross-fire. Despite the danger of his position he himself advanced on horseback under the windows of the Hôtel de Ville, replying to those who cautioned him that he must be the first victim. But not a shot was fired. On the whole, the mob was not hostile, and the leaders within the building readily realized, in face of the imposing military force, that the game was up. Retreating from room to room, Barbès and Albert were finally cornered and arrested without violence. Even the rioters who had urged Barbès to take possession of the Hôtel de Ville and proclaim a new Government, seeing their discomfiture, now clamoured for his death.[1] Carried in triumph by the seething multitude, now entirely won over to the cause of order, Lamartine entered the Hôtel de Ville and there signed the warrant for the arrest of the conspirators and their transportation to the fortress of Vincennes, where, a few hours earlier, he had himself expected to pass the night, awaiting execution.

These formalities accomplished, remounting his horse, Lamartine started back to the Palais Bourbon. His progress was, indeed, a royal one. The bridle of his steed held on either side by troopers; surrounded by a squadron of mounted Garde Nationale, by dragoons on foot and a vast concourse of shouting citizens who sought to grasp his hand or touch the hem of his coat, he tasted once more the intoxicating cup of idolizing popularity. The dense crowds thronged the streets, the terraces of the Louvre and the Tuileries, the windows and roofs of the houses

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[1] Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 45.

TRIUMPH OF LAMARTINE, MAY 15, 1848

From a contemporary lithograph in colors by F. Tichet

along the line of march. Handkerchiefs waved on all sides, flowers were strewn in his path, and amid the deafening uproar of applause his name was vociferated even more loudly than the cries of "Vive la République!" "Vive l'Assemblée nationale!" For a short space his magnetic personality hypnotized afresh those who had looked upon him as the saviour of social order and the very incarnation of the political principles they held dear. Alas, this redundant ovation was to prove evanescent as the fumes of incense burned before the graven image of a heathen temple. As he himself confessed less than a year later: "Never was the name of a simple citizen, adopted as the symbol of restored order, raised higher by a people, only to fall the more suddenly a few days later in the slough of unpopularity." And he adds, with unwonted modesty: "It was evident that above all triumphs the one which most intoxicated the French people was the victory over anarchy." [1]

Hastening up the steps of the Palais Bourbon, Lamartine immediately mounted the rostrum, and announced to his colleagues that their authority was reëstablished. During his absence a sort of retrospective panic had seized upon the Assembly. The obscure and equivocal nature of the popular onslaught now gave rise to exaggerated suspicions. Mutual accusations and perfidious insinuations were hurled broadcast, and for a time it seemed as if the fierce reaction might surpass the episode in deplorable consequences. Instinctively grasping the peril, Lamartine sought to inspire moderation in the reprisals some of the more exasperated representatives were eager to decree. When, a little later, Louis Blanc entered the Chamber and attempted to address his colleagues, he was received with a furious onslaught of vituperation which made it impossible for him to obtain a hearing. The complicity of Caussidière, Prefect of Police, has never been definitely established. His rôle was a passive one; but the accusations levelled against him, and which he was unable to refute, make grave suspicion admissible. Thanks to his own phenomenal audacity and the protection of both Lamartine and Ledru-Rollin, he was enabled to escape the vengeance of what was termed the "reaction,"[1] although eventually forced to resign.

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[1] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 449; also *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 392.

Critical biographers of Lamartine, and the chroniclers and eye-witnesses of the events described, concur almost unanimously in minimizing the importance of the part played by him on May 15. Never prone to hide his light beneath a bushel, Lamartine himself, in the accounts he has left us, displays a certain hesitancy, a lack of comprehensive unity, which goes to substantiate the insinuations of those who discerned with the decline of his popularity that of his self-assurance also. Undoubtedly he failed to seize what was possibly a unique opportunity for his personal aggrandizement. Lord Normanby believed that had he taken advantage of the situation, Lamartine would have found the stimulus of assured popularity he required, and would have redeemed in public opinion all recollection of his former error (the foisting of Ledru-Rollin as his colleague in the Executive Commission).[2] As it was, those who believed he would justify their anticipations, and who looked upon him as the antagonist of most of the revolutionary results of a social upheaval of which he was in great part the author, were doomed to disappointment. Normanby accuses the National Assembly of "disgraceful inaction," and Lamartine of jealousy of General Changarnier after the latter's successful action on April 16.[1] Speculation as to the truth of this supposition is idle: those who have followed the public and private career of the man must dismiss it unreservedly. The "disgraceful inaction" of the Assembly touches Lamartine only as a member of that collective whole: he was certainly not a passive spectator during the episode.

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[1] Cf. Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 54; cf. also Caussidière (*Mémoires*, vol. V, p. 8), who cites a flattering letter from Lamartine.

[2] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 400, note; cf. also Alexis de Tocqueville, *Souvenirs*, p. 162.

But did he give the full measure of his still considerable influence? The character of the rioting was so complex in its origin and significance, that correlation between cause and effect is difficult to establish. The fact remains, however, that Lamartine had successfully coped with situations as perilous and complicated during the months of his uncertain rule at the Hôtel de Ville. Must we seek the solution of the riddle of his half-hearted resistance on May 15 in a moral lassitude engendered by thwarted ambitions when his name came out fourth from the ballot-box which elected the Executive Commission? His efforts during the last three months to conciliate what M. de Mazade has called the "two republics" (that of Lamartine and that of Ledru-Rollin) had resulted, it is true, in a half victory, but the meagre result had been achieved at the cost of the confidence hitherto universally accorded him. The popularity which a few days earlier would have carried him, practically uncontested, to the Presidency of the Republic, was shattered by a generous impulse which was not only incomprehensible to the practical politicians who would have welcomed his advent to power, but which rendered him an object of suspicion and mistrust to a very large majority within the Assembly. In other words, the moral authority which had been his melted like snow when he apparently abdicated his claims to supremacy by merging them with the "spiritless amalgam" of the Executive Commission.[2]

[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 403.
[2] De Mazade, *Lamartine*, p. 184.

That the "crime d'occasion," as M. Gallois very aptly terms the riots of May 15[1] had taken him by surprise, is possible; but impromptu situations, however grave, had hitherto only stimulated his tireless energy, never for a moment baffled his serene assurance. To a far greater extent than appears on the surface Lamartine was handicapped by the very machinery he had been at such pains to set in motion. The sullen hostility of a considerable faction in the Chamber was increasingly evident. Contra-revolutionaries sought clandestinely to demolish the structure raised by the men of February and to discredit those who had introduced popular liberties. The lack of a firm hand, determined to repress at any cost reactionary impulses, encouraged a spirit of segregation, and made the subsequent military dictatorship inevitable. In a sense Lamartine was made the scapegoat of a situation he had undoubtedly contributed to create, but for the shortcomings and disappointments of which he could not strictly be held accountable. It was a practical demonstration of the eternal verity of La Fontaine's fable of the earthen and the iron pots: the weaker vessel was doomed to destruction when subjected to repeated rough contact with a coarser substance. Commenting on the peculiarities of the situation during the invasion of the Chamber, M. Quentin-Bauchart points out that no single individual played a predominating rôle; adding significantly: "Au lieu de jouer ce rôle qui lui appartenait, Lamartine reste au second plan."[2] When he slipped out of his place during the height of the tumult, his absence was not even noticed. Some show of interest was discernible, it is true, after order had been restored, and Lamartine, returning to his place, took command of the expedition which went to the relief of the Hôtel de Ville.

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[1] *Histoire de la république de 1848*, vol. II, p. 179.

[2] *Lamartine, homme politique* (*La politique intérieure*), p. 336.

But there was no enthusiasm for the erstwhile popular hero to whom the Provisional Government had instinctively turned on so many similar occasions. Why? Because, in the first place, the Assembly was essentially reactionary in its component parts, and, as such, had no use for a popular hero tainted by presumed alliances with demagogues such as the leaders of the clubs, or even Ledru-Rollin, discredited as the latter was. And because, in the second place, the Assembly had not been slow in realizing that Lamartine, possessed of what might be termed conditional popularity, was not endowed by nature with those sterner attributes so essential in a forceful parliamentary leader. He had hesitated to assume the effective direction of the Assembly and of the country, while that course was still open to him. Even had he attempted such a task, he must have failed; unless, indeed, he had instantly and irrevocably broken with the compromising associations he chivalrously clung to, and which he was temperamentally incapable of sacrificing to personal interests. If May 15 signalized the final overthrow of the power which the clubs had arrogated during the days of the Provisional Government, it also marked the irremediable collapse of the influence of the man who had fatuously believed he could guide and control the fanatic elements which composed their strength. His determined shielding of Caussidière, and the temerity of the support he lent Louis Blanc, not only compassed his own political ruin, but drew suspicion upon the Executive Commission.

The Assembly naturally laid the chief blame for the violation of the sanctity of their deliberations at the door of the men who were supposed to exercise supreme authority, and who had the means at hand to enforce it. Far from attempting to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of the outraged representatives by the pursuance of a relentless policy of retaliation, however, the Executive Commission, Lamartine at their head, sought, or seemed to seek, every opportunity of minimizing or attenuating the guilt of the conspirators. As a consequence the wildest rumours of treachery were current in the lobbies of the Palais Bourbon. Lord Normanby notes, on May 22, that "the Assembly thinks it has reason to believe that the Government meditate a *coup de main* against them shortly." [1] Yet it was not so much what the Executive Commission was supposed to do as what they left undone that angered Parliament, and especially was Lamartine accused as being responsible for the apathy.

M. Quentin-Bauchart does not exaggerate when he states that every circumstance, almost each day since May 4, had undermined the prestige and influence of the man whom ten departments had triumphantly elected.[2] Noting this reaction in the public estimation of Lamartine, Lord Normanby writes: "With all my disposition, founded on the personal associations of former days, to do justice to the brilliant qualities to which the cause of order was so much indebted in critical moments, I am bound to say the change in his conduct was so sudden and inexplicable, that I cannot attribute any part of his present unpopularity to the proverbial instability of the French national character." [3] And the Ambassador goes on to explain that it is not only the alliance with Ledru-Rollin [4] which has brought about this revulsion of sentiment, but that the hostile feeling under which Lamartine laboured was "distrust of his capacity for the regular conduct of affairs, combined with suspicions as to the sincerity of some of his professions." Unfortunately, he did nothing to retrieve popular confidence: on the contrary, his actions appeared, in view of the critical situation in which he found himself, ever more impolitic. Was he sincere when expressing the conviction that in a few weeks he would be more popular than ever? Did his serene self-confidence blind him as to the probability of such a resuscitation? There is every reason for the belief that Lamartine realized fully that he had momentarily lost his grip on the elements he had previously controlled: none for the supposition that his faith in his own capacity to cope with the new situation wavered seriously. A complication involving serious issues had, indeed, occurred. On June 8 complementary elections had given a seat in the Assembly to Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, not only in the Department of the Seine, but in three others as well. Scenting peril, Lamartine reëntered the arena to combat the popular idol with what M. Quentin-Bauchart has termed "un acharnement qu'il poussa jusqu'à la mauvaise foi." [1]

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[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 414.

[2] *Lamartine* (*La politique intérieure*), p. 344.

[3] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 452.

[4] In a volume of personal reminiscences entitled *Retours sur la vie*, M. Chambolle relates a conversation with Lamartine towards the end of March or early in April, which, if credence can be given it, goes far to explain the curious relations existing between the poet-statesman and the wily politician Ledru-Rollin. Lamartine is reported as saying specifically when defining the perils of his political position: "Blanqui and his associates consider me an obstacle which they are determined to remove. I know their plans: at any moment I may be assassinated! Nevertheless,

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there are people who accuse me of being an accomplice of the terrorists, of going hand in hand with Ledru-Rollin! Although not animated with so furious a hatred as that of his 'séides,' Ledru-Rollin has a finger in all plots directed against me. He is in collusion with Blanqui, either because he fears him, or because he desires him as an auxiliary. One thing is certain: no sooner have we taken a resolution in Council than Ledru-Rollin informs the conspirators of its nature, in order that the consequences may be made to abort." Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 261, also Lamartine, *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, pp. 267 and 397.

[1] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

CHAPTER XLIX

LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

LAMARTINE'S personal antipathy towards everything appertaining to the despotic rule of the great Emperor was as deep-rooted as long-standing. An anti-Bonapartist by tradition and political convictions, he had not been slow to recognize the dangers which lurked in the hero-worship to which his contemporaries were all too prone. To the pretender whose exploit at Strasbourg in 1836 had aroused his withering contempt, he was now disposed to show no mercy.[1] It will be remembered that his speech on May 26, 1840, against the proposed transfer of the great soldier's ashes from St. Helena to France, was one of the most magnificent outbursts of oratorical eloquence which had fallen from his lips during his brilliant parliamentary career.[2] The moral courage he then displayed in resisting, practically alone, the flood of popular enthusiasm must ever count amongst the most meritorious of his public actions. He knew that he courted not only unpopularity, but defeat. "J'en accepte l'impopularité d'un jour," he proudly cried in his eagerness to warn his compatriots of the dangers this deification of the great War Lord must entail. Despite the prophetic ring of his arguments, they failed to awake an echo in a generation humiliated by over two decades of inglorious national eclipse. The peril he had then foreseen now actually stared him in the face. Again he risked what popularity still remained to him, and passionately, but in less felicitous terms, denounced the certain disaster to the newly acquired public liberties infatuation must entail. "Sa Majesté Louis Bonaparte," as X. Doudan[1] dubbed the candidate for parliamentary honours as early as June 10, 1848, was indeed making alarmingly rapid strides towards popularity with the masses. The sophisms with which his adherents sought to plead his cause met with facile credence, owing to the general feeling of insecurity, both within the Chamber and, strange to say, with leaders of the subversive parties in the streets.

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[1] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. I, p. 287.

[2] Cf. Louis Barthou, *Lamartine orateur*, p. 104 ("Autour d'un Chef d'Œuvre"), who only endorses the universal opinion of his contemporaries and posterity.

Lamartine's dealings with the Prince dated from the early days of the Provisional Government. In March he had been approached by M. de Persigny, a trusted agent, as to the advisability of Louis Napoleon's candidature for a seat in the Assembly. On this occasion Lamartine's action had been commendably prompt and forceful. Should the Prince not have left for England that same evening, he assured the emissary, he would be arrested on the morrow.[2] A month later, M. Vieillard, who had been the Prince's tutor, came on a similar errand. Again Lamartine refused, qualifying his refusal, however, by the statement that, though determined to utilize the Law of Banishment should the Prince insist on remaining in France, once the Constitution of the Republic was duly adopted, he would himself introduce a motion to have the decree revoked. "La république une fois fondée peut admettre tous les citoyens," he added.[3]

The Law of 1832 had condemned to banishment all the princes of the Bonaparte family; nevertheless,

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[1] *Mélanges et lettres*, vol. II, p. 169.

[2] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. IV, p. 13.

[3] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. IV, p. 14. The risk to be run by admitting the Prince to the political life of France may be gauged by the following phrase in one of his letters, from the prison of Ham, to a friend in London: "Je ne désire pas sortir des lieux où je suis, car ici je suis à ma place; avec le nom que je porte, il me faut l'ombre d'un cachot ou la lumière du pouvoir." Cf. André Lebey, *Les trois coups d'état de Louis Napoléon Bonaparte*, p. 417.

Lamartine made no opposition to the election to the Chamber of Princes Pierre and Napoleon and of Prince Murat. On May 27, M. Piétri, a warm supporter of the Bonapartes, moved for the formal abrogation of the Law of Exile. When the discussion was announced Lamartine was absent from the Chamber; whether intentionally or by accident, is doubtful. Finally the motion was taken up by a large majority, and the decisive debate slated for June 8.[1] On this same date, however, the Prince's overwhelming success at the polls in three departments had singularly complicated the issue, and Lamartine realized that energetic action was imperative. Difficult as it was to form a reliable opinion, circumstances seemed to indicate that the Assembly might not favour the unceremonious expulsion of a member whose popularity with a not inconsiderable faction of the electorate was glaringly evident, and who seemed, perhaps, to offer guarantees it might be dangerous to ignore.

All these were considerations Lamartine had most assuredly taken into account before he ventured on the course he now adopted. On June 10 an opportunity was afforded him, which, had he then possessed the sanction of his colleagues, must inevitably have been crowned with success. An interpellation called for explanations concerning cries of "Vive l'Empereur" which had been given vent to by a regiment of the line at Troyes. General Cavaignac, however, forestalled, or usurped, the occasion, and, leaping to his feet, poured forth such an impassioned reply that he carried the entire House with him, amid shouts of "Vive la République!" Considerable as the General's success had been, Lamartine quickly realized that it had only momentarily disarmed the Assembly, and that stringent measures were more than ever imperative to avert permanently the peril he discerned. Louis Blanc, whose testimony is not always reliable, but who was certainly well informed of events which took place at the Luxembourg, asserts that Lamartine even attempted to foment an anti-Bonapartist manifestation by means of the factional elements under the control of the leaders in that hot-bed of agitation.[1] In view of Lamartine's conduct on June 12, the accusation is comprehensible, although the allegation is totally unproved. Nevertheless, he was driven by circumstances, perhaps against his better judgment, to a stratagem the apparent insincerity of which (not to use a harsher term) was not in accord with his wonted frank fearlessness and scrupulous probity. It has been hinted that, when exacting the expulsion of Louis Napoleon, Lamartine sought to reaffirm thereby his own greatly compromised authority, and by means of a vote of confidence reëstablish the credit of the Executive Commission.[2] Referring to the military review, pompously styled "Fête de la Concorde," which the Government had "tactlessly" [3] organized on May 21, Lamartine reflects on the decline of his personal popularity as demonstrated on this occasion.[4] The writer attributes the reaction to the chagrin of the monarchical party, the ingratitude of the proletariat, and the threatening unrest among the idle hordes attached to the *Ateliers nationaux*, but recognizes also the influences exerted by the Bonapartist faction, whose agents were active in all three.[1] An avowed opponent of political proscription, he nevertheless refused to allow the ambitions of an individual to jeopardize national order.

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[1] Cf. Quentin-Bauchart (*op. cit.*, p. 348), who would appear to cast the blame for the proceedings upon Lamartine's abstention. Nor had Lamartine's attitude towards the Prince been invariably and thoroughly consistent. In January, 1846, he had attacked Louis-Philippe's Government on account of the King's refusal to allow the prisoner at Ham to go to his dying father's bedside in Rome. Cf. Lebey, *op. cit.*, p. 477.

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[1] Cf. *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 137.

[2] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

[3] Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 66.

[4] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 456. M. Jules Simon, in his address on the occasion of the Centenary of the poet's birth at Mâcon, on October 21, 1890, expressed a diametrically opposite opinion. He then told his hearers that, seated directly behind Lamartine, he had whispered to him that whatever the official name given to the celebration, it was in reality in honour of Lamartine. And he adds that such, indeed, it proved to be. Cf. speech at Mâcon cited in the volume published by the Académie de Mâcon, *Le Centenaire de Lamartine*, p. 37. A flare-up of Lamartinian popularity there undoubtedly was: but it was sporadic and short-lived, and, as has been seen, Lamartine was not its dupe. Cf. also Émile Deschanel,

In his "Letter to the Ten Departments," Lamartine states that, on June 8, in the session of the Executive Commission, he spoke as follows: "The aspect of the Republic afflicts me. We are marching towards a crisis. It will not be a riot, it will not be a battle; it will be a campaign extending over several days and in which various factions will unite. The National Assembly, which represents the national sovereignty, may be compromised, even forced, perhaps, to leave Paris momentarily. It is necessary that we guard against such eventuality with all the energy of a republican State."[2] Measures for the effective enforcement of such power he had already taken, and was still perfecting. An imposing military garrison, numbering over fifty-four thousand troops, was assembled within and without the walls of the capital. But in view of the magic of the name which it was expected would incite the masses to action, how far could they be trusted? In Lamartine's eyes the most elementary prudence dictated that the firebrand which threatened public order should be kept at a distance. Accordingly he took the initiative with his colleagues, and demanded the temporary ostracism of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, until such time as the secure foundations of

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Lamartine, vol. II, p. 240, who qualifies it: "un dernier sourire de la Destinée"; cf. also Dr. Poumiès de la Siboutie (*Souvenirs d'un médecin de Paris*, p. 320), who was an eye-witness.

[1] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, pp. 456 and 462.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

the Republic should be laid by the adoption of the Constitution. What the action of the Assembly might be when the Government's decree was submitted to it was problematical. A favourable moment must be awaited. Pocketing the decree of banishment, duly signed in Council on the morning of June 12, Lamartine, with the explicit consent of his colleagues, proposed to be himself the judge of the propitious moment to make use of it.[1]

Meanwhile rumours of what was brewing had preceded him, and when he made his entry in the Chamber, members of the Bonaparte family had set in motion all the parliamentary machinery at their command to avert or attenuate the blow. Mounting the rostrum in his turn, Lamartine launched forth on a long recapitulation of the services rendered by the Provisional Government, and of the problems which confronted the Executive Commission. The Assembly afforded but a listless attention to this oft-told tale, scenting more exciting episodes to come. A show of enthusiasm greeted the orator, however, during a magnificent evocation of the incident of the red flag at the Hôtel de Ville. But Lamartine felt that he did not hold his audience under the accustomed spell, and evidences of the confusion which reigned in his mind were clearly noticeable. Fatigue, perhaps discouragement, overtook him, and in the midst of his impassioned harangue, he begged for a few moments of rest, seating himself on the steps of the tribune, his head in his hands. Hardly had this self-imposed interruption occurred, when shouts and the report of firearms outside the Chamber caused the representatives to spring nervously to their feet.

There is much conflicting testimony as to what actually took place. A shot was certainly fired close to the General commanding the troops, and cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" were heard on many sides. But the rumours which reached the Chamber were grossly (some say wilfully) exaggerated. Lamartine's embarrassment during the delivery of the first part of his speech had been extreme, for the Government had, prior to the session, despatched orders to all the Departments for the arrest of Louis Bonaparte.[1] Should the Chamber refuse to sanction this measure, grave complications must ensue. Lamartine, who had been vainly casting about for a peg upon which to hang his arguments, eagerly seized the opportunity now offered him.[2] Hastily remounting the rostrum, he cried with communicative emotion: "Citizens! A fatal occurrence has just interrupted the words I was having the honour to address to this Assembly. While I was speaking of the constitution of order, and of the guarantees we are all disposed to furnish in order to strengthen authority, a shot, several discharges of firearms, they say, have been directed against the commander of the Garde Nationale of Paris, another against one of the brave officers of the army, a third levelled at the breast of an officer of the National Guard. These shots were fired to the accompaniment of cries of 'Vive l'Empereur!'"

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[1] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 463.

And, taking advantage of the intense emotion his words aroused, he added with increasing warmth, but with small regard for actual facts: "Gentlemen! these are the first drops of blood which have besmirched the eternally pure and glorious revolution of February 24. All glory to the people! Hail to the various parties of the Republic! At least this blood has not been shed by their hands. It has flowed, not in the name of Liberty, but in the name of the memories of military fanaticism, and of opinions inherently, although perhaps involuntarily, yet inveterately hostile to any Republic." Wild enthusiasm greeted this outburst, for within the Chamber the confusion of anxious uncertainty still reigned, the exact proportions of the event being unknown. Judging the moment opportune, Lamartine reminded his hearers that the Government had taken all advisable precautions against an eventuality they had only too clearly foreseen. "This morning," he cried, "an hour before the opening of this session, we unanimously signed a declaration which we proposed submitting to you at its close, and which circumstances now force me to read to you immediately. When the audacity of factions is caught red-handed, sullied with French blood, the law must be applied by acclamation!" [1] Although disapproving murmurs were distinctly audible, the orator proceeded, undaunted, to explain that the decree invalidating the election of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was in reality merely the enforcement of the Law of 1832, "until such time as the Assembly might decide otherwise."

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[1] Victor Pierre, *Histoire de la république de 1848*, vol. 1, p. 344; cf. also Normanby (*op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 461), who cites a copy of the decree.

[2] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

Lamartine tells us that on the conclusion of his speech the whole Assembly, with the exception of eight or ten members, rose to its feet with cries of "Vive la République!" ratifying by general acclamation the energetic resolution of the Government.[2] But in reality matters did not pass quite so smoothly as he would give us to understand. Violent opposition was made to the vote by acclamation by adherents of the Bonapartist faction, and although the majority was undoubtedly prepared (at first) to uphold the Government, the news which now began to filter in, concerning the comparative insignificance of the assault, produced a reaction. The moment was a perilous one, for it made the emotion he had displayed a few moments before appear as the artifice of an accomplished comedian, seeking to entrap his audience by means of an odious subterfuge, as disloyal as it was empty. Nevertheless, the orator continued to occupy the rostrum, and might even now have saved the situation and turned the tables in his favour by a show of energy and determination. Instead of this, his hearers were now asked to follow him upon new ground. Did he fear the inevitable accusation, he who had been so loud, and, be it said, so consistent, in his defence of political liberties? Whatever the nature of his hesitation, the subject he now broached was hardly calculated to allay the irritation which had seized upon the Chamber, for it dealt with the accusations of complicity with leaders of subversive factions which had been from time to time levelled against him. As he spoke, it was evident that he was rapidly losing his hold on his audience, and, what was worse, their sympathy and confidence. Enumerating the heads on which he was held guilty, he finally thundered: "Well, yes! Undoubtedly I conspired with Sobrier, I conspired with Blanqui, I conspired with several others. Do you know the nature of my conspiracies? I conspired with them as the lightning-rod conspires with the lightning, in order to eliminate the electricity." [1]

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[1] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 464; cf. also Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 458. In his *Souvenirs de l'année 1848*, Maxime de Camp writes that in the streets cries of "Vive Barbès!" and "Vive Napoléon!" were uttered alternately by the same rioters, proving connivance between the extreme socialists and the Bonapartists. Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 221 and 225. André Lebey, in his *Louis Napoléon Bonaparte et la révolution de 1848*, makes mention of this simultaneous acclamation of Barbès and Napoleon. Cf. *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 319.

[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 469.

In spite of the applause this picturesque aphorism elicited, the temper of the Assembly forbade its being accepted in any but its most literal form, while such was the prejudice against him that many of his hearers were inclined to consider the sally as an attenuated confession of his guilt. With the opening of the session on June 13, it became apparent that public opinion was much indisposed towards the Executive Commission as a whole, and towards Lamartine in particular on account of the "trap" which it was believed had been set on the previous day. The Government's action with regard to Louis Napoleon was felt to be unjust if it had been expedient, and most inexpedient even if it had been just. Lamartine took no part in the debate which followed, leaving to Ledru-Rollin the arduous task of vindicating the Government against the allegations brought forward by Jules Favre, their former colleague. The false step of the previous day cost the Government dear. With biting sarcasm, Favre, "a master in the art of passionless invective," was pitiless in his exposure of the contradictory action of Lamartine and his associates, holding up to scorn their faults of omission and commission, and proving logically that the Law of 1832, for the exclusion of the Bonaparte family, had been virtually and recently repealed by the Assembly, and under the inspiration of the Government which now sought to enforce the expulsion of a legally elected representative of the people.[1]

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 336; cf. also *Le conseiller du peuple*, April, 1849, p. 43.

The vote which followed was a blow aimed directly at Lamartine, who impulsively tendered his resignation, but with equal haste allowed himself to be persuaded to withdraw it. "He was wrong to withdraw his resignation," writes his apologist, Charles Alexandre; adding that he did so prompted by generous abnegation and a wild sentiment of self-sacrifice, in order not to desert the field on the eve of battle.[2] His friends had approved the first impulse, and Dargaud, writing to Alexandre on June 14, clearly foreshadowed the inevitable consequences of the admission of Louis Bonaparte to the Assembly. Since he was powerless to avert the catastrophe, it were better that Lamartine be freed from official responsibility. "M. de Lamartine," he assures his correspondent, "n'a démérité ni de la France, ni de l'Europe, ni de la postérité";[1] but his reputation, it was felt by those who had his interests at heart, might suffer should he persist in clinging to a forlorn hope.

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[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 465 and 467.

[2] *Souvenirs sur Lamartine*, p. 129.

Giving extracts from Dargaud's journal, M. Jean des Cognets notes the moral and physical lassitude which assailed Lamartine at this period. "Often on returning home he avoided the circle of friends awaiting him, and took refuge in his bed"; much to the disgust of the Legitimists, who continued to haunt his wife's salon in the hope of finding protection under the roof of the popular idol, and who, noting the decline of his influence, blamed him for having aroused passions he was no longer capable of controlling.[2] The process of slow and methodical strangulation adopted by the Assembly was telling on him; yet he struggled on, losing ground day by day. "Ce n'est pas assez dire," wrote Dargaud, "que la popularité de M. de Lamartine baissait, elle s'abîmait sous ses pieds."[3] And the faithful friend and trusted confidant goes on to relate the arguments he used in his endeavour to persuade Lamartine to retire. Everywhere it was said, he told him, that it was personal ambition which caused him to retain his position on the Executive Commission and that, realizing his impotency, he merely remained with folded arms. To all of which Lamartine sadly shook his head, remarking: "If I fail in my duty towards my colleagues, there will be a universal uprising both in the Assembly and in the streets; the Constitution will not be formulated, or it will be achieved only amid the discharge of firearms. Moreover, I expect a struggle, either with the Orleanist Regency or with the Ateliers nationaux. I must prepare for the battle and be victorious. With this end in view I submit to the insults of those who dared not utter a word when I saved the Hôtel de Ville. I make myself small, humble, patient, in order that I may obtain noble results. I make myself as a grain of sand in the mortar which shall cement the Republic."[1]

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[1] *Souvenirs sur Lamartine*, p. 128.

[2] *La vie intérieure de Lamartine*, p. 412.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 417.

The dream of the Orleanists did not, perhaps, constitute a very serious menace to the Republic: the collapse of Louis-Philippe's Government had been too complete to authorize dynastic ambitions at this early date. But the problem of the dissolution of the Ateliers nationaux was a real and ever-increasing source of peril. What was to be done with this army of over a hundred thousand men who looked to their leaders at the Luxembourg for bread? Lamartine had proposed several measures for the gradual dispersal of this dangerous social element. He contended that many might be employed with profit on public works in Algeria; others might be furnished with billets in private industrial enterprises; or on the construction of railways in the provinces; others again be enrolled in the army. But the Assembly would listen to none of these, and, by its decree abolishing suddenly and without preparation the Ateliers nationaux, hastened the inevitable catastrophe Lamartine had foreseen.

Did the Assembly lend itself on this occasion to the manœuvres of the Bonapartists in order to be rid of the obnoxious Executive Commission?[2] Lamartine would seem to have believed such action probable, for he entrusted negotiations concerning the Ateliers to henchmen such as Marie and Garnier-Pagès, occupying himself almost exclusively with the task of uniting in or near Paris a military force adequate to cope with the disorders he so clearly foresaw.

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[1] *La vie intérieure de Lamartine,* p. 418.

[2] Cf. Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 420, and Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

The Bonapartist plot, through the recent action of the Prince, seemed, at least temporarily, quiescent. On June 14, Louis Napoleon had addressed a letter to the President of the Chamber stating, somewhat equivocally, it is true, that in view of the disorders his election had given rise to, he would prefer to remain in exile. A phrase in this letter had caused, however, an outburst of what Lord Normanby calls "rabid fury." [1] "Si le peuple m'impose des devoirs," the Prince wrote, "je saurai les remplir." As no mention was made of the Republic, these words were construed as indicating dynastic ambitions. Two days later the session was opened with the reading of a second letter, in which Louis Napoleon expressed his desire for the maintenance of "une République sage, grande, et intelligente," and in order to facilitate this end, in spite of the preference shown him in five Departments, he tendered his resignation. Again to quote Lord Normanby, who was an eye-witness of the scenes in the Chamber, "this announcement was received with evident satisfaction by almost all the Assembly, except the Executive Council." [2] And the Ambassador adds: "I have little doubt that they regretted the occasion which they thought an alleged conspiracy on his part might have given them, to have made the Assembly feel itself in the wrong in the dispute which they had had with reference to him, and have induced them, by voting either his arrest or his exclusion, to continue their official tenure on their own terms." Lord Normanby believed that the position of the Executive Commission was thereby made a "very absurd" one, and that by reason of their excessive zeal they in reality only added

[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 476.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 480.

to the "odium" with which the Government was regarded. Severe as the judgment seems, there is undoubtedly a grain of truth in it, at least as far as some of the members of the Council were concerned.

As for Lamartine, opinions differ. That he was actuated by consideration of personal ambition the testimony of his intimates denies. But he did still cling to the illusion that his presence in the Government was useful, nay, a necessity to its very existence. "When the ship is leaking," he told Dargaud, who urged his retirement, "I am ready to act as a bolt in order to repair it, even if it be only as a plug to stop a hole." [1] Nor was this humility assumed. The sacrifice of his popularity must be made, and he was prepared to drain the cup to the dregs. Writing to the Marquis Gino Capponi, in Florence, he says: "At this moment I am at the bottom of the wheel of political fortune. But I wished it, in order to establish the Republic on a basis of concord." [2]

Unfortunately, the sacrifice was a vain one. Fearing to risk popular disfavour, influenced also by the Bonapartists in the House who were playing a waiting game, the Assembly declined to accept Louis Napoleon's resignation, and contented themselves by referring the matter to the Minister of the Interior. This action was taken on the purely technical ground that the Prince's admission was conditional, "subject to proof of age and nationality," and that the resignation could therefore not be accepted.[3] But the subterfuge was undoubtedly resorted to in view of the growing sentiment in the streets, and was perhaps dictated as much by hostility towards Lamartine as by any real sympathy with a movement the ultimate issue of which was patent. "La France a pris la République au sérieux, elle la défendra contre tous," Lamartine had assured his hearers on June 12. That he had been mistaken, even at this early date, was to become more and more apparent. What France wanted was the reëstablishment of civic order, the peaceful resumption of the affairs of daily life. This the Government in power seemed unable to guarantee; and the mass of the population, the bourgeoisie at its head, looked to the advent of a strong man whose prestige, military or dynastic, could save them from the fruitless and ruinous agitation of the demagogues. In an emergency Lamartine had proved himself a strong man, indeed; but the steady routine of practical politics was certainly not his forte. The gradual decline of his popularity was due less to a mere whim on the part of those who had idolized the heroic defender of public liberties at the Hôtel de Ville, than to a calm and unbiassed appreciation of the fact that his very moderation was now detrimental to the cause he had so nobly espoused. There are cases when surgical intervention becomes imperative. Such a crisis had now been reached, and Lamartine was no expert with the knife, clever diagnostician though he be. His psychological insight had been at fault: the propitious moment for personal energetic action had been allowed to pass. Lacking the temperament of a dictator, he henceforth found himself relegated to a position of political passivity which became as gall and wormwood to his soul. This result had been deemed inevitable by many impartial observers who watched the closing scenes of those stirring times. Donald Mitchell ("Ik Marvel"), in his "Battle Summer," writing of Lamartine's "magnificent scheme of a Christianized Government," admits that "already, he has sought to warp his pure governmental philosophy into a philosophy of expedients." And a few paragraphs further he adds: "His views of humanity are too poetic for a statesman; they are not morbid, but glowing with his own generous intent. He counts mankind — and Frenchkind specially — better than it is. He sees no need of cautions, since he ignores the evils which those cautions are to prevent. His kindness is his weakness; and his humanity betrays his judgment. Such a man, in our day, should not be without honour, even when fallen!" [1] This foreign critic, a spectator of Lamartine's heroic effort, expresses himself convinced that, in his fall, he will carry with him "a good heart and good intentions, and the name of having done a good, honest man's work!"

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[1] Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 418.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCCXXXI, July 30, 1848.

[3] Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 109.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 262. In his amusing memoirs extending over half a century (1830–80), Arsène Houssaye every now and then touches on a more serious note. Commenting on Lamartine's popularity in 1848, he writes that he might have aspired to any position, even that of Emperor: "car alors la vraie France était lamartinienne." But he let the opportunity slip. "He had energy for good," adds this critic, "but in order to become a master of men one must have strength for good and evil. Is it not Talleyrand who says: 'En politique l'honneur et la vertu ne sont que des fantômes'?" Cf. *Les Confessions*, vol. II, p. 315.

CHAPTER L

THE INSURRECTION OF HUNGER

THE days of the Executive Commission were numbered. On several occasions Lamartine had urged his colleagues to hand over to the Assembly the semblance of power they still maintained. But until this was unanimously decided, he would not desert the sinking ship.[1]

Every day angry crowds assembled in the neighbourhood of the Chamber, some clamouring for the dissolution of the Ateliers nationaux, others protesting that the workmen were worthy of their wage. On June 21, the Executive Commission, inspired by the very general opinion prevailing in the Assembly,[2] decided to act, and issued a decree deporting to the provinces the bulk of the beneficiaries of this State charity. But this precaution was adopted too late. The violent agitation, which was universal on the 22d, was followed on the morrow by the sudden erection of barricades in many quarters of the capital. Lamartine, who had been tireless in his efforts to induce General Cavaignac to prepare efficacious support,[3] now urged the commander to wage the struggle "as a battle, and not as a disseminated series of attacks against the rioters."[4] Cries of "À bas Lamartine!" clearly demonstrated that the malcontents held the erstwhile popular hero accountable for the decision which had been taken. Noting an equally significant disposition in the Chamber to be rid of the Executive, Lamartine proudly refused to resign until order had been restored. As he told M. Bonjean, who urged the Assembly to delegate a certain number of national representatives to march with the troops, it behooved members of the Government alone to fulfil this dangerous task; at the same time proclaiming: "After the victory of order, we will hold ourselves at the disposal of the Assembly." [1]

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[1] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 471.

[2] Cf. Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

[3] Cf. *Rapport de la commission d'enquête*, vol. I, p. 306.

[4] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. IV, p. 7.

Fighting had now become general in most quarters of Paris, already with great loss of life on both sides. Despite the very tangible causes of the insurrection, insinuations were rife as to the rôle played by "foreign gold." [2] It was said that Russian and English gold was found on the rebels.[3] That to many foreign potentates the principles proclaimed by the Republic were hateful, there is no question. But the fact that some of the adherents of the clubs sympathized with the Bonapartists is not proof positive of their venality. The insurrection of June was not a concerted action: it was the sudden, irresistible explosion of despair.[4] Without doubt the Bonapartists seized the opportunity of fraternizing with the proletariat, and, if we credit the contemporaneous republican press, large sums were disbursed by imperialist agents in the furtherance of their cause.[5]

But the crisis which had been reached was the result of social rather than political considerations. The economic difficulties of the lower classes had, indeed, become unbearable, and the sudden dissolution of the vast almshouse, dignified by the euphemistic appellation of Ateliers nationaux, was the last straw. Louis Blanc aptly termed the popular revolt "the insurrection of Hunger."[1] The very cry of the discharged workmen and their sympathizers, as they marched through the streets, was significant enough. "Du pain ou du plomb!" they vociferated; bread for their starving families, or bullets for themselves and those who had brought them to this pass. The socialist Blanc is fair enough when he stigmatizes this huge expenditure of the public funds on humiliating and fictitious labour "as sterile as almsgiving, and as hypocritical." [2]

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[1] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 340; also Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 420.

[2] As statements to this effect were made officially in the Chamber, Lord Normanby took the matter up. Cf. *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 29 and 36.

[3] Maxime du Camp, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

[4] Cf. André Lebey (*op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 339), who cites Louis Blanc and George Sand, and also Stern.

[5] Robert Pimienta, *La propagande Bonapartiste en 1848*, pp. 40, 44, and 72.

Lamartine from the outset had frowned upon what, for lack of a better term, was styled the "Organization of Labour," and warned his hearers against what was, in a way, a privileged class. A democrat in the true sense, he maintained that all men should accept the responsibilities enfranchisement entailed. To paraphrase Cavour's famous aphorism, he advocated "Free Labour in a Free State." [3] As early as 1843, writing to his friend M. Chambolle, Lamartine urged: "Organisons cette belle nation en démocratie puissante et régulière." [4] Perhaps at that moment he did not grasp the full import of the complications which must inevitably arise during this reconstructive process of the political body: perhaps he was somewhat vague as to the steps to be taken. But he was unquestionably sincere as to the principles he professed, and the future was to vindicate his contention. Defending himself at a later date against vituperations and the accusation of having followed a chimerical policy, the democracy he advocated being invariably vanquished by demagogy, he maintained that had Cavaignac made energetic use of the amply sufficient troops his (Lamartine's) foresight had assembled in Paris, "the hesitating demagogues could have been crushed in an hour under the heel of armed democracy." [1]

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[1] *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 126.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

[3] "L'Église libre dans un État libre," was Cavour's dictum.

[4] Cf. A. Chambolle, *Retours sur la vie*, p. 490.

During those fateful days of June the responsibility rested not on Lamartine, but with the General whose indecision or stubbornness squandered hundreds of precious lives. The reproachful wail, "Du pain ou du plomb," was no political catchword, although it was the direct result of a political blunder, magnified by politicians and demagogues as a political crime. The strikers, for such they really were, went forth to battle, not against the Republic nor against Democracy, but protesting against the violation of a compact. That the movement rapidly degenerated into civil war, with all its attendant horrors, was as much the result of intrigues within the Assembly as of any ill-considered action on the part of the Executive Commission; or, to go farther back, of the reckless expedient sanctioned by the Provisional Government.

In the turmoil which ensued after the outbreak on the 23d, the Government, fearing to be cut off from the Assembly, established their headquarters, with those of Cavaignac, in the apartments allotted to the President of the Chamber. Discouraged, nay despairing, Lamartine sought to spur the General to energetic action. He mentions a plan of battle drawn up with the combined consent of the Executive and the military chief.[2] But for one reason or another Cavaignac hesitated to carry out the very drastic measures advocated. Moreover, it would appear that his orders were not executed with the rapidity and fidelity he had a right to expect.[3] He has been accused of temporizing with the insurgents in order to be rid of the control exercised by the Executive, and to further his personal ambitions.[1] That there was blundering is certain; but no documentary evidence of treachery is forthcoming, and Cavaignac's subsequent conduct absolves him of all suspicion of selfish motives.

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 427. For minute details cf. *Rapport de la commission d'enquête*, vol. II, p. 212, *et seq.* Odilon Barrot was President of the Committee.

[2] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, pp. 416–20.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 418, and Louis Blanc, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 144.

Towards five o'clock that afternoon, Lamartine, despondent, but still trusting to the personal magnetism he exercised, determined himself to direct operations on the Boulevards. His horses had been saddled since the morning in view of the eventualities this momentous 23d of June might bring forth. Mounting "Saphyr," followed by Pierre Bonaparte on another of his horses, and a small escort, he hastened to the Boulevard du Temple, where the insurgents lay entrenched behind their barricades. "Lamartine désirait la mort," he wrote at a later date in his "Mémoires politiques," explaining that he did so on account of the "odious responsibility of blood which must so unjustly, but inevitably, weigh upon him." [2] He certainly exposed his person recklessly, pushing forward to the barricades and haranguing friends and foes alike under a murderous cross-fire. On the arrival of Cavaignac with a couple of thousand men, an attempt was made to dislodge the rebels. Led by Lamartine in person, in the glare of lightning, the roar of thunder, and the furious downpour of a summer storm, the young troops were finally victorious. The assault cost the defenders of order some four hundred dead and wounded. The horse Lamartine was riding was wounded; the one he had lent to Pierre Bonaparte was killed. Charles Alexandre writes that the insurgents themselves shared the enthusiasm Lamartine's presence aroused, and that, professing their love for him and their distrust of the Assembly, they called upon him to save them, to guide and command them, adding that should he consent to do so, they would themselves disarm their companions.[1]

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[1] Louis Blanc, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 143. By no means an impartial historian, however, in spite of his personal honesty of purpose.

[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 422; cf. also Thiel, *Seize mois de commandement de la garde nationale;* and Henri de Lacretelle, *Lamartine et ses amis*, p. 141.

Perhaps isolated groups, realizing the hopelessness of a prolonged struggle with the military, made such overtures. Lamartine himself, when mentioning this episode, does not give us to understand that the crowd which welcomed him was composed of rebels in arms. Nor is it probable that this was the case, as men whose blood was fired with the lust of battle would hardly have "plundered the florists' shops in order to cover his horse with flowers."[2] The scene as related by Lamartine, and reported by the more enthusiastic of his biographers,[3] is doubtless a remnant of the incorrigible optimism which characterized the poet, always inseparable from the statesman and historian. Nor was Lamartine himself (at that time) the dupe of any ephemeral outburst of enthusiasm his undoubted heroism in the face of peril may have called forth. Seen in retrospect these isolated tokens of sympathy assumed the aspect of universal acclamations. The testimony of many an eye-witness is, however, available to correct the sanguine allegations of a later date. In the fourth volume of the "Mémoires politiques" Lamartine even seeks to shield his own responsibility at the expense of Cavaignac. Mortification over his fall, mingled with a not unnatural jealousy at the success of the man he had himself recalled from Africa and placed in a prominent position, warped his judgment. "His chagrin was the greater," opines M. Quentin-Bauchart, "because he honestly believed that he (Lamartine) had saved his country, while Cavaignac had merely carried out his orders, and even executed them badly."[1] "La victoire des journées de juin," wrote Lamartine in 1863, "était en grande partie ma victoire; car seul j'avais prévu la bataille, seul j'avais organisé le combat."[2] And, expatiating on the injustice done him, and the motives which prompted the resignation of the Executive Commission, he avers: "J'avais sauvé la patrie par l'habile nomination du général."

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[1] *Souvenirs de Lamartine;* also *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 423.

[2] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. III, p. 424.

[3] Alexandre among others. Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 134.

Few will presume to contest Lamartine's claims on the gratitude of his country. But the impartial critic must perforce admit that with the insurrection of June the hour of his public utility had passed. Morally, if not technically, he was responsible for the blunders and errors of policy which brought about this regrettable eclipse of a glorious career. The pronounced personal hostility he encountered in the Assembly was due to various causes: some were purely party considerations, others base and unworthy ambitions. Yet, when on June 24, at eight o'clock in the morning, a number of representatives forced the door of the Council Chamber and urged the Executive to resign in favour of a military dictatorship, these men were undoubtedly actuated as much by considerations of public safety as by personal antagonism. The Government had, by its sins of commission or omission, proved itself incapable of protecting life and property, and it was felt the restoration of order must be entrusted to more energetic hands. Acting in this spirit, at ten o'clock that same morning, the Assembly, in permanent session, gave full civil power, as well as military, to General Cavaignac, nominating him temporary Dictator and establishing a state of siege in Paris.

Lamartine, in the name of his colleagues, immediately drafted the following dignified acceptance of the national decree: "The Executive Commission must have failed at once in its duties and its honour by retiring in face of a public danger. It is only in consequence of the vote of the Assembly that it now withdraws. In yielding up the powers with which you invested it, its members merge themselves in the ranks of the national representatives, to face, with you, the common peril, and to devote themselves to the welfare of the Republic." [1] Humiliating as the ousting of the Executive Commission was to its members, none were taken by surprise. The surreptitious manœuvres of Armand Marrast, Mayor of Paris, and the so-called party of the "National," a paper which had played a leading part during the Revolution of February, were known to all. When Cavaignac was nominated Minister of War, this party discerned in him the ideal successor of Lamartine, whose personal independence and suspicious connection with the leaders of the clubs had given umbrage to his erstwhile supporters. Gradually the ranks of the conspirators were strengthened by the adherence of members of the Assembly who, while perhaps not unreservedly hand in glove with the party with which they joined issues, could not forgive Lamartine his insistence on the adjunction of Ledru-Rollin to the Executive. The insufficiency of the Executive Commission was recognized by all. Yet, despite general dissatisfaction, principally owing to the prestige which even now surrounded Lamartine, it still inspired a certain respect. It was felt, moreover, that in ousting it certain principles inherent to the Revolution of February must be sacrificed. Desirous as were its opponents to encompass its overthrow, they wished to proceed without brutality.[2] Hence the dual motives, fear and resentment, which actuated the Assembly when, without formally deposing the Commission that they had elected, they adopted the motion of Pascal Duprat, which delegated all executive powers to General Cavaignac: a subterfuge which rendered the resignation of the Commission imperative.[1]

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[1] *Op. cit.* (*La politique intérieure*), p. 366.

[2] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. IV, p. 3.

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 342.

[2] Cf. Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 367.

Dargaud says that a few days later he encountered Ledru-Rollin on the stairs of Lamartine's house. On entering, his friend repeated to him the conversation which had just taken place. "I told him," said Lamartine, "that we could never again join forces, because, although for political reasons we had worked together, our natures were too far apart to permit of intercourse." [2] Thus ended a political association which had, indeed, cost him dear. If not the prime cause of his loss of popularity and of the antagonism of the Assembly, it was certainly one of the factors which contributed the most to his political undoing.[3]

Hardly had the lauded idol of the Hôtel de Ville been hurled from his pedestal, before the thousand tongues of calumny were loosened. The erstwhile popular hero was now accused of the most monstrous iniquities. Insulting pamphlets were hawked about the streets, holding him up to the execration of his fellow-citizens. His pact with the communists was openly denounced; the deceit he had practised upon the labouring classes, made apparent; his handiwork in the demonstrations of March 17 and April 16, shown up in the light of ignominious personal ambition; and the terrible days of June, attributed directly to his weakness and indecision. Even his private life did not escape the fury of his detractors. His integrity was impugned, it being currently asserted that during his tenure of office he had abstracted from the Public Treasury sums varying between twelve hundred thousand and two million francs, and had employed them in paying off private debts and for the purchase of estates in France and houses in London. To such lengths did his traducers go that Lamartine was finally constrained to take the matter up publicly, and, in his "Letter to the Ten Departments," specifically refute the outrageous accusations levelled against his honour.[1] Although with impartial judges he had no difficulty in vindicating the purity of his actions as well as his motives, some of the mud thrown against him inevitably sullied his reputation in the eyes of those who had been disappointed or deceived concerning the material or moral results of the Revolution he had patronized.

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[1] Cf. De Freycinet, *Souvenirs*, vol. 1, p. 47.

[2] Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 423.

[3] *Contra*, Lacretelle, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

"J'avais du Mirabeau dans l'arrière-pensée de ma vie," wrote Lamartine when commenting (in 1860) on the political fires of his youth.[2] In a sense the destinies of these two greatest of French orators were alike. Both, by virtue of their marvellous eloquence, swayed and guided their countrymen in crises not wholly dissimilar: both overreached and compromised themselves. But here the analogy ceases, for Mirabeau was convicted of double-dealing in his relations with Court and Assembly, while Lamartine never for an instant wavered in his fidelity and allegiance to the Republic, although his tactics lent colour to momentary misconstruction.

Defending his action at a later date (1856) he confesses that in 1848, "J'étais un républicain improvisé." His republicanism was, moreover, of the most conservative type. He fought for the preservation of life, order, freedom of religious opinion, equality before the law, respect of private property, harmony between social classes, the peace of Europe, and the strict observance of international treaties.[1] During those three months of power he discountenanced the application of each half-baked socialistic theory the radicals demanded, including the organization of labour, although he advocated a law acknowledging "le droit de vivre" — a distinction too subtle to be grasped by the popular mind. But he realized the danger attending a too sudden and radical grant of political increment to the masses, and his effort tended, not to restrict public liberties, forsooth, but to allow of suitable preparation. There is a world of truth in an aphorism of his which lies buried, with countless other treasures, within the twenty-eight octavo volumes of the "Cours familier de littérature." Writing on the aims and ambitions, political and social, which constituted at once the force and the weakness of the Revolution of February, 1848, he exclaims: "Chaque révolution est un pas vers le vrai, si elle veut en faire dix, elle tombe dans la fausse utopie et dans l'impossible." [2]

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[1] Cf. *op. cit., passim*, published August 25, 1848. In the details of his private affairs, Lamartine states that the half-million of debts which he paid off came in part from the royalties on his *Histoire des Girondins* and from the sale of some of his estates. Moreover, he makes a confession which redounds to his everlasting credit. A few days prior to February 24, he had negotiated the sale of his literary works for five hundred and forty thousand francs. The crisis which followed on the Revolution was a terrible one for his publishers. Realizing their situation, he voluntarily destroyed the contract. Cf. also *Édouard Dubois et Lamartine*, by J. Caplain ("Les Finances de Lamartine," p. 65 *et seq.*), who gives many curious and edifying details of financial transactions at this period.

[2] Cf. *Cours de littérature*, vol. x, p. 246.

Despite the bloody excesses of the days of June, he was convinced of the truth of this axiom. "Voilà les révolutions," he concluded in his "Letter to the Ten Departments" which had overwhelmingly elected him in April: ". . . Leurs plus grands phénomènes ne sont pas leurs crimes, ce sont leurs erreurs." [3]

For those "errors" Lamartine was in a measure responsible. Yet his had invariably been the restraining influence. "It was the sad end of the dictatorship of eloquence and imagination," writes Charles de Mazade.[1] He had played with fire, taking risks a less optimistic, and above all a less imaginative, nature would have hesitated to assume: which, indeed, a prosaic statesman such as Thiers declined to hazard.[2]

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[1] *Cours de littérature*, vol. II, p. 35.

[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. XV, p. 223.

[3] *Lettre aux dix départements*, p. 34. It will be remembered that the Archbishop of Paris, Mgr. Affre, was killed on a barricade while exhorting the rebels. The assassination of Generals Bréa and Négrier, victims to their duty, must also be added to the long list of crimes perpetrated during those awful days. Cf. Stern, *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. III, p. 193.

The inevitable reaction had set in, and even the strong arm of a military dictator like Cavaignac was to prove powerless long to stem the irresistible current, which was to sweep away the Republic itself.

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[1] *Lamartine*, p. 186.

[2] Describing a dinner party in Paris on February 25, 1851, Count Hübner, the Austrian Ambassador, speaking of Thiers, writes: "Il se développe comme *high tory* et protectionniste. *Quel caméléon!*" Cf. *Souvenirs d'un ambassadeur*, vol. 1, p. 10.

CHAPTER LI

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

In one of Daudet's novels, an old priest, the Abbé Germane, philosophically remarks: "For the great sorrows of life I know of but three antidotes: work, prayer, and a pipe." Eventually Lamartine found salvation in this trinity.

But the blow to his pride had been a terrible one. A period of profound moral depression was the inevitable sequel to his fall. The ever-faithful Dargaud found him wrapped in "stoical indifference," and his exhortations only elicited a grudging admission that the world might still hold some promise of relief. "I am not blasé concerning art, religion, or friendship," vouchsafed Lamartine, "but I am disgusted with politics. As a statesman and a tribune my career is closed. That cord is broken." [1] Suffering physically as well as morally, the disappointed man's condition was a cause of deep anxiety to wife and friends. Fortunately, with the help of Madame de Lamartine, Dargaud was able to persuade his friend to break temporarily with painful associations and surroundings, and take up his residence in the peaceful Bois de Boulogne, at Castel-Madrid. Here he was close enough to the capital in case of need, yet sufficiently isolated to escape importunate visitors. Lord Normanby, who drove out to see him on July 9, writes: "I found him looking very much altered, evidently much affected by his present position, though talking of it as the result of popular injustice, which he should survive. He went over the old ground with me, of the reasons for his connection with

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[1] Dargaud's *Journal*, cited by Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 425.

Ledru-Rollin."[1] To the end of his life explanations of this fidelity to his colleague formed, indeed, his constant preoccupation. In the pages of the "Conseiller du peuple" and the "Cours de littérature" references to this subject are recurrent. Plausible as some of these contentions are, they fail to carry conviction, and most critics share the British Ambassador's scepticism as to the political prescience displayed.

But his cup of bitterness was not yet drained. The Assembly added to his humiliations by ordering an inquest concerning May 15 and the days of June, and the Commission appointed for this investigation pushed its searching tentacles as far afield as the dissensions existing in the Provisional Government during the early stages of the Revolution.

Although, writing to Lacretelle on August 6, Lamartine professes not to fear discussion, yet he terms the inquest the "machine infernale de 1848," adding that he will do his best to circumscribe it. "I want peace," he continues; "I will see that the Republic gets peace, or I will perish in the attempt."[2] This desire for peace was not a selfish one, having in view his individual tranquillity, but owing to his conviction that concord alone could ensure the adoption of the Constitution which was to crown the Republic. To this end he was determined to sacrifice himself without stint, making use of the vestige of prestige which still clung to his name and fame.

The inquest touched him but indirectly, for all parties realized that Lamartine had been more sinned against than sinning. Nevertheless, the moment was a critical one. Pale and calm he listened, on August 3, to the first reading of the report. Hesitating to attack personally the erstwhile popular idol, the drafters took as scapegoats Ledru-Rollin, Caussidière, and Louis Blanc. Ledru-Rollin, full of resource and remarkably talented, successfully exculpated himself. The two others were less lucky or less clever, and the Assembly eventually authorized proceedings being taken against them. During the long and painful debate which took place on August 25, Lamartine fully realized that behind these victims he himself was aimed at. Again and again he was tempted to intervene: but he yielded to the urgent pleadings of friends and remained silent. "If I am personally besmirched, I shall speak," he indignantly warned Victor Hugo, who was present. "Believe me, not even then," urged the poet. "Let us expostulate over the wounds of France, but not when our own scratches are concerned." [1]

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[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 107.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCCXXIII.

The political prestige which still adhered to his name proved greater than might have been expected, given the circumstances attending his fall. When, on October 6, he mounted the rostrum to speak on the absorbing question of the Constitution, and the methods to be adopted in the forthcoming presidential elections, the interest demonstrated by the Assembly was intense. Between September 6 and this date he had, indeed, spoken on four occasions concerning problems connected with the elaboration of the Constitution, but these discourses had partaken more of a philosophical than of a concrete nature, dealing, as they did, with abstract social and political ideals; were in fact what M. Barthou terms "a public examination of his political conscience." [2] Nevertheless, his eloquence was as persuasive as ever, and on October 6 he attained the highest summit to which his oratorical genius had ever soared. But, again to quote M. Barthou, "his clairvoyance is no longer the same. It would appear at times that the gift of prophecy which had inspired such extraordinary insight had abandoned him, or that perhaps he resigned himself to the fatalism of events."[1] Be this as it may, his speeches during September, and that of October 6, give evidence of a singularly clear mind: the mind, moreover, not of a dreamer, but of a precursor who foresees all the social problems which the theories he advances must entail, and who intuitively catches glimpses of practical solutions much as they exist to-day.[2] Vague as are the indications of any concrete political programme, the study of these speeches affords invaluable material for a true appreciation of the mentality of the man who had so recently witnessed the shipwreck of so many of his social illusions. M. Barthou is right when he blames the statesman for losing himself in a maze of philosophical consideration, the brilliancy of which fails to conceal the perilous indecision under which he laboured. That Lamartine should have hesitated, under the circumstances, to dogmatize, is inconceivable. He was aware of the fragility of his credit with the Assembly. It behooved him to be prudent; tentative even. Yet, stripped of ornamental verbiage and reduced to essentials, the "recommendations" he essayed denote the germs of a policy he had long made his own.[3] When M. Barthou qualifies his admiration for the speech of October 6, by asserting that "la thèse, malheureusement, valait moins que le discours," his criticism is dictated by his knowledge of subsequent events.[4] Unfortunately for Lamartine, and for France, the thesis was to prove fallacious: for France, because its adoption by the Assembly led to the overthrow of the Republic; for Lamartine, since it led to accusations of personal ambitions, which even the most fervent of his biographers have been powerless to dispel or disprove totally.

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[1] Cf. Victor Hugo, *Choses vues*, p. 78.

[2] *Lamartine, orateur politique*, p. 277.

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[1] *Lamartine, orateur politique*, p. 274.

[2] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, pp. 392–470, *passim*.

[3] Cf. *Politique rationnelle*, published in 1831, concerning a single Chamber.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 284.

That Lamartine was keenly aware of the danger entailed by submitting the election of the President directly to the people is certain. "There are names which fascinate the crowd as a mirage attracts herds of cattle, as a bit of crimson cloth draws animals deprived of reason." [1] Yet he was convinced that the people must be made to share the responsibilities of the choice, as only in such case could stable political and social institutions ensue. "*Alea jacta est!* Que Dieu et le peuple prononcent!" was his concluding exhortation. It was to "La République de Washington" that he aspired: "A dream, if you will; but a beautiful dream for France and humanity." [2] Did Lamartine advocate the intervention of universal suffrage because he knew that if the appointment were vested in the Assembly his own chances must be null? That he believed his popularity with the Nation to be intact is certain. If we turn again to his correspondence, that mirror of his soul, we read in a letter to Lacretelle, dated September 11, 1848: "I am solitary. Souls come back to me one by one, like birds to the tree which has been struck by lightning. I don't call them, I don't desire them, God preserve me! One does not traverse twice, without falling into the abyss, three months such as those from February to May 11. May God designate some one else." [3] And to Circourt a few days later: "From all parts of France they are already coming back to me, and, if I wished it, within a week I would be far more popular than on February 25. There is remorse in the sentiment which brings the people back to me, and that remorse is passionate: but I do not desire the dangerous favour." Yet he adds that, although the Assembly underrates him as a statesman, their love of him is returning. "The Departments are in this respect more advanced than Paris. If the President were to be appointed by the country, and only two months hence, I would be nominated, you may be certain. But there exists a false idea that the Chamber should appoint. I will combat this weakness."[1]

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[1] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. v, p. 469.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 470.

[3] *Correspondance*, DCCCCXXXV.

A note of unaccustomed pessimism is detected on September 21, in a frank and open letter to Charles Alexandre. "The Republic is passing through the most perilous complaints of infancy. Has it been born prematurely? It behooves us to strengthen it, and to pass it on to our children. But the people of Paris, so admirable under my guidance during four months, has gone mad and become tumultuous since there lurks a legitimate sovereign within the National Representation."[2] And he adds that Providence alone can save them from their folly.

"It behooves us to strengthen it" (the Republic), he had told Alexandre, and the *modus operandi* he adopted is indicated in his speech of October 6. Did he believe that he alone was capable of strengthening it? Lamartine's illusions as to his popularity died hard. On October 14, he wrote Lacretelle: "I do not desire the supreme distinction. I have a horror of it. But I would accept it, as I accepted the Hôtel de Ville and its Tarpeian Rock."[3] To other correspondents, especially to Dargaud, he lets it be seen that he is convinced the country is with him, but repeats the "horror" with which the possible assumption of the Presidency fills him. "I have no other word to express my negative ambition. . . . I remain impassive; I will neither withdraw with my name a trump card from France's hand, nor bribe destiny by making a single movement. If, by any impossibility, this burden fall upon my shoulders, I would accept it, as one accepts Calvary and the Cross." To which he adds that he does not believe in Bonaparte's chances, in spite of all the noise made about his name. "Il faudrait un autre Molière pour écrire un autre gigantesque 'Misanthrope,' si la bêtise humaine allait jusque-là."[1] But the writer was singularly mistaken when he assumed, at the close of this same letter, that with the democratic, socialist, and labour votes, he could count on half a million suffrages. When the presidential election took place a month later (December 10), Lamartine polled but 7910 votes, against 5,434,226, cast in favour of the candidate "la bêtise humaine" entrusted with its destiny.[2] Even Ledru-Rollin, to whom Lamartine had sacrificed so much, scored 370,119 votes, taking the third place on the list,[3] the second being occupied by Cavaignac, with a million and a half, the fourth by the socialist Raspail (36,920), and the fifth and last by the man who had saved France from anarchy and ruin but nine months before.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCCXXXVI.

[2] *Ibid.*, DCCCCXXXVIII.

[3] *Ibid.*, DCCCCXXXIX.

Exactly one month before the elections, Lamartine, apparently alarmed over the silence which was gathering about his name, instructed M. de Champvans in four consecutive letters to contradict in the press the rumours that he would refuse the Presidency. "If the voice of the country called me, I would accept without hesitation, as I accepted the people's appeal in February." Yet even now he professes to disdain the honour, although repeating, in each epistle, that, if elected, he would accept.[4]

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCCXXI.

[2] Cf. Stern, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 319. Some authorities grant Lamartine higher returns, but none admit more than 17,000 votes. Cf. Sugier, *Lamartine*, p. 271. In his *Mémoires politiques* (vol. IV, p. 55) Lamartine says he received 18,000 votes.

[3] Writing on October 29, Lord Normanby says: "The 'candidature' of M. Ledru-Rollin and M. Lamartine can only weaken the chances of General Cavaignac. It is at present calculated that the first may have 400,000 votes, the latter not quite as many." *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 274.

[4] *Correspondance*, DCCCCXLIII–VI; cf. also *La France parlementaire*, vol. VI, p. 34, letter to the Press dated November 30, 1848.

MM. Louis Ulbach and L. de Ronchaud, in their respective introductions to "La France parlementaire" and "La politique de Lamartine," have outlined and sought to make clear the motives which guided their hero's political action. Both agree that the speech of October 6 was a grievous mistake; but laud the generosity of his views, founded, as they were, on his desire to leave with the people the recently acquired right to nominate the man they wished to entrust with their interests.[1] While this is undoubtedly true, the citations from private letters, given above, lend colour to the surmise that Lamartine believed himself to be the man best fitted to carry out the popular conception of the Republic he had so largely contributed to found in February. In his searching examination and able defence of Lamartine's action on this occasion, while considering the speech as "impolitic" and "imprudent," M. E. Sugier is of two minds as to its psychological significance. Fearing an arbitrary condemnation and equally desirous of avoiding the semblance of a too facile acquittal, his arraignment is unconvincing. "Agreed that with the election by the people, Lamartine considered it possible to secure the majority of votes for the Presidency; yet it does not follow that he spoke eloquently in favour of this mode of election only from personal interest." [2] Perhaps not "*only*" from personal interests: but the fact remains that he *expected* to be nominated by popular acclamation as a consequence of the thoroughly democratic attitude he had assumed. No aspersion can be cast on the honesty of his purpose. He had every right to aspire to the Presidency. There could be no question of a usurpation of power, or ambition towards a dictatorship.

Commenting on the election of Prince Louis Napoléon in his "Mémoires politiques," [1] Lamartine states that he had no illusions concerning his own chances, and that "par probité de républicain," he cast his vote in favour of Cavaignac. But these lines were written many years later. His own contemporaneous testimony goes to prove that he did not then despair of success. What seemed a favourable opportunity to retrieve his lost popularity, or at least of freeing himself from certain allegations which had contributed to his fall, was offered during the parliamentary inquiry concerning the conduct of General Cavaignac and the Executive Commission during the insurrection of June. Writing on November 1, Lord Normanby believed that had Lamartine seized this occasion "with promptitude and skill" it might have revived the chances of his "almost forgotten candidature." [2] Why did he not do so? It would seem that his political friends, if not his intimates, looked for some such vindication. To quote Normanby again, much speculation was afloat as to the revelations Lamartine might make. "For the first three months after the insurrection, he proclaimed to every one who chose to listen to him that he was in possession of facts which would annihilate General Cavaignac, but latterly it is supposed there has been rather an approximation between them." And the Ambassador continues: "It seems to me not impossible that unless he [Lamartine] is too much bound to his party by his former declarations, he may take the line of professing too much attachment to the Republic to allow him to indulge his personal feelings by giving way to accusations against any one. The peculiar style of

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[1] Cf. Ulbach, *op. cit.* p. cii, and Ronchaud, *op. cit.*, p. lxxvii.

[2] Cf. *Lamartine, étude morale*, pp. 267–76.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 55. Referring to Lamartine's action in suggesting that the people vote for the Presidency, Madame Juliette Adam writes in her *Journal:* "How can M. de Lamartine lend his authority in support of such an aberration? Unless it be that he deceives himself to the point of believing that he will be elected President of the Republic, his conduct is inconceivable." Cf. *Le Roman de mon enfance*, p. 323.

[2] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 307.

Lamartine's oratory would give much effect to any such professions of magnanimity; and whilst they would be of immediate service to General Cavaignac, their apparent generosity might have the effect of diverting from the General to the speaker the suffrages of many sincere Republicans."

Lamartine was totally incapable of any such Machiavelian intervention. It was precisely his "attachment to the Republic" which kept him silent during this crisis. That he had valid reason for dissatisfaction with the General's inertia during the early stages of the insurrection is certain. But in his "Mémoires politiques" he specifically states: "I make no accusations concerning what has been considered a treachery: I never believed it. General Cavaignac was, in my opinion, incapable of it." [1]

Much damaging evidence was brought forward during the inquiry concerning Cavaignac's passivity during the insurrection: yet Lamartine kept silent. Normanby is responsible for the statement that when M. Garnier-Pagès descended from the tribune, after a vigorous speech vindicating the erstwhile Executive Commission, he called to Lamartine, across several other members: "Now if you do not speak, you are ruined as a public man." Normanby's personal impressions at the moment were unfavourable to Lamartine. "He had neither the moral courage to maintain the cause of his friends against an adverse auditory, if he thought their accusations just; nor the magnanimity to make a recantation of his previous censure, if he thought General Cavaignac's defence complete." Yet, in a footnote, he softens this harsh criticism by adding that, although he cannot account for this unexpected silence on the part of Lamartine, "whose impulses are generous and whose courage is undoubted," "It was one of those moments which every one accustomed to parliamentary life has experienced, when a variety of unknown motives combine to produce an unfortunate suppression of speech." [1]

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[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 7; cf. also Louis Blanc, *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, vol. II, p. 140. Alexis de Tocqueville, never a lenient critic of Lamartine, making amends for certain harshness, confessed: "To-day I believe that fear of giving rise to a mortal conflict actuated his conduct as much as did ambition. I ought to have judged him in this manner at the time." *Souvenirs*, pp. 162–72.

The "unknown motives" were, without a shadow of doubt, the preservation of the Republic, which dissensions within the administrative fold must, perforce, imperil. But the "unfortunate suppression of speech," although perhaps of some temporary benefit to the cause, lost Lamartine, as Garnier-Pagès had prognosticated, the last vestiges of popularity which had clung to him. It was a lost opportunity of rehabilitating himself in the public eye which could never be retrieved.

A fatalist by temperament, there was a touch of the philosophy of the Orient in the calmness with which he accepted the destruction of his political ambitions.[2] A disappointed man he was, indeed, but his chagrin neither soured his temper nor warped his sympathies. "One must pay for one's qualities," wrote Madame de Lamartine to Charles Alexandre; "optimism, ideals, genius are great gifts entailing great sufferings. Reality is hidden beneath the haze of ideal perspectives, and when the true situation is revealed, it is as the lightning which barely precedes the thunderclap." If now and then he gave vent to passionate outbursts against the ingratitude of the people, such paroxysms were evanescent and quickly followed by fervent revivals of his inextinguishable love of Humanity and his earnest endeavours to benefit those of whose ingratitude he complained. With his wife Lamartine realized that he must pay for his qualities, and he never flinched before the enormity of his debt. Nor was this moral indebtedness the only source of anxiety. Hardly had he fallen from political grace before visions of financial disaster stared him in the face. But of this anon: the political debt he had contracted with his country must first be liquidated.

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[1] Normanby, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 371. Whatever Garnier-Pagès may have said in a moment of extreme excitement, it in no way impaired the warm friendship existing between the two men. "If the Republic could be personified in men such as Garnier-Pagès," said Lamartine to Henri de Lacretelle, "it would be still more odious not to adore it." Cf. *Lamartine et ses amis*, p. 173.

[2] Writing to Monckton Milnes in 1844, Alexis de Tocqueville said, "The only thing is that you appear to me, like Lamartine, to have returned from the East too much the Mussulman." Wemyss Reid, *Life of Lord Houghton*, vol. I, p. 328.

It was, perhaps, as much to rehabilitate himself in the eyes of his fellow-citizens at Mâcon and the neighbourhood, as in search of rest, that he returned home on October 17, 1848. The reception accorded him was, on the surface, most gratifying. Practically the whole of Mâcon, the Mayor at their head, turned out to welcome their distinguished fellow-citizen. An immense concourse of all classes, to which adhered vintners from the countryside, accompanied him to Monceaux, a couple of hours beyond the town. From the balcony of the château, Lamartine, deeply moved by this spontaneous demonstration of affection, harangued the motley crowd in felicitous terms. Adapting his metaphors to his audience, he sketched rapidly the significance of the events in which he had taken part, giving all the credit of the successful establishment of the Republic to the people. "Je vous rapporte une révolution innocente," he cried. "It is perhaps the first time in history that these two words are associated one with the other." The closing sentences of his inspiring speech disclose, however, the anxiety which beset him. Persistent rumours were in circulation as to his betrayal of the cause of order and his complicity with the insurgents. Referring boldly to these calumnies, he maintained that never for a moment had he doubted the constancy of those who had been his lifelong friends and companions, who knew him as no others could know him; never had he feared for an instant that his fellow-townsmen would misjudge him.[1] Alas! even that constancy was to fail him. Deputation followed deputation, it is true; ovations succeeded one another almost daily for a fortnight or more, each more apparently enthusiastic than its predecessor. The poison of what he had termed, in his speech of October 6, "un fanatisme posthume," was in the air; had permeated even this peaceful countryside, so devoted to, and proud of, their "Monsieur Alphonse," as he was affectionately styled. Henri de Lacretelle, in his "Lamartine et ses amis," describes in minute detail a political meeting organized at his Château de Cormatin, when cries of "À bas la République! À bas Lamartine!" and of "Vive l'Empereur!" interrupted the speaker, who was Lamartine himself.[2] "*Alea jacta est!* Let God and the People pronounce!" [3] The action of the people on December 10 had been the response. "Il y avait sur les rangs pour la présidence un fétiche et un dieu," wrote Dargaud to Charles Alexandre; "le peuple a choisi le fétiche." [4] "A god" Lamartine was to his friends, perhaps; yet the glamour of a name sufficed, as their divinity had foreseen, to attract the unthinking masses, as "a red rag fascinates the bull."

On his return to Paris, at the end of November, 1848, Lamartine again took up his residence in the isolated villa in the Bois de Boulogne. Had he then given up all hope as to the possibility of his own election to the Presidency? A letter to M. de Champvans, dated from Mâcon on November 18, would seem to imply that he still clung to his illusions. On the morrow he was to address a meeting at Mâcon, held in honour of the adoption of the Constitution, he tells his correspondent. He characterizes his utterances as "axioms to be engraved on marble," at the same time urging his friend to have them reproduced in as many newspapers and reviews as possible. "Not to help my candidature, but for posterity, as the honest and platonic commentary on the Republic; its code, if it endures; *in memoriam*, if it perish." [1] Yet he systematically refused to undertake an electoral campaign, or any semblance of one, assuring the organizers of a banquet at Mâcon that the sentiments of the man who had defended the Republic at the risk of his life at the Hôtel de Ville were too well known to the country at large to require any special manifesto or political programme from his lips or pen.[2] Nevertheless, as late as November 30, he addressed a circular letter to the press, in which, while repeating his objections to a manifesto, he specifically stated: "I therefore declare to my friends that I accept the candidacy with the sole object of not diminishing by a man the forces of the Republic, and in order not to restrict the choice of the country by the withdrawal of a name." [3]

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[1] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. VI, p. 5; also Alexandre, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

[2] The date of this occurrence is given as October 17, a manifest error, as Lamartine only reached Mâcon on that day. Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 144.

[3] Speech of October 6, *La France parlementaire*, vol. V, p. 469.

[4] *Souvenirs sur Lamartine*, p. 160. In his *Portraits politiques et révolutionnaires*, Cuvillier-Fleury writes that History will answer Lamartine's contention that to "make a revolution" one must be either "a madman, a criminal, or a god," that he (Lamartine) being none of these, but only the greatest poet of his time, created nought but chaos. Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 144.

M. Quentin-Bauchart is of the opinion that to the end the memory of his triumphal election to the Assembly in April kept alive his illusions concerning his chances for the Presidency. "His defeat was prodigious and unexpected, and must have affected him profoundly," adds this historian.[1]

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCCXLVI. M. L. de Ronchaud, in his masterly introduction to *La politique de Lamartine*, calls the "Discours au peuple," delivered at Mâcon on November 10, 1848, the utterances "less of a statesman than of a pontiff, who mingles with politics, morals and religion, as was the custom in ancient times." Having lost his faith in man, he prays God to bless the Constitution. *Op. cit.*, p. lxxviii.

[2] *La France parlementaire*, vol. VI, p. 18; also Alexandre, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[3] *La France parlementaire*, vol. VI, p. 34.

Is it as balm to his wounded pride that Lamartine, in his "Mémoires politiques," [2] dwells at length upon the following curious incident? On his election to the Presidency, Louis Napoleon vainly cast about for men likely to offer efficacious support to his Government by virtue of their political neutrality during the recent quarrels. Being unsuccessful in this direction and losing patience (says Lamartine), the President decided to throw himself into the arms of those men who had founded the Republic and remained steadfast to the principles of order, welcome to the majority throughout the land. M. Duclerc, to whom Louis Napoleon opened himself, urged him to make a direct appeal to Lamartine, with the belief that, flattered by this action, the late head of the Provisional Government, recognizing the pressing need of the crisis, would accept the "principal" portfolio at his hands. Without warning Lamartine, the Prince-President, accompanied by M. Duclerc, rode out to the Bois de Boulogne after dark, and sent word by his companion to Lamartine requesting an immediate secret interview. Hastily leaving the dinner table, Lamartine joined the Prince in a neighbouring avenue of pines.

In as few words as possible Prince Napoleon, after some flattering remarks on Lamartine's conduct of affairs, proposed that he should associate his name and talents with the new régime. "I cordially thanked the Prince," writes Lamartine: "I assured him that I would not hesitate to devote myself a second time, with him, to the salvation of my country, could I believe my intervention useful. . . . But I am, rightly or wrongly, the most compromised and most depopularized of all Frenchmen," he added, enumerating the reasons for the universal discredit into which he had fallen. "I fought against your own Bonapartist party," he expostulated. "All the Bonapartists and military party must abhor me!" Nor is his unpopularity confined to those who had supported the party now in power, he objects; all political parties in France now shun him. "These are my reasons for refusing the honour you would do me: a desperate honour the acceptance of which would only signify vanity on my part, and constitute a real peril for you. . . . Je me perdrais sans vous servir," he insisted, referring again to his unpopularity. "As far as popularity is concerned," smilingly asserted the Prince, "don't take that into consideration, *j'en ai pour deux*." But Lamartine remained firm, although he gave his word of honour that should the Prince fail to obtain the coöperation of the men whose names he suggested, he would again throw himself into the breach. "We will save each other, or perish together," he averred. "Meanwhile, whom do you suggest that I consult?" urged the Prince. Lamartine named Odilon Barrot and De Tocqueville, adding: "If they refuse, I repeat I will be with you." Whereupon the interlocutors parted with a cordial handshake.

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[1] *Lamartine* (*La politique intérieure*), p. 391.

[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 56. Charles Alexandre, in his *Madame de Lamartine*, p. 168, makes mention of another attempt on the part of the President to secure Lamartine's aid in forming a Republican Ministry.

Early next morning word came to Lamartine that the Prince had been successful in his quest, and that he was released from his promise. Fantastic as this tale may seem, it is not wholly improbable that the Prince took some steps to conciliate a man he most sincerely admired and respected, and one whose influence had, moreover, been so great as not to preclude the possibility of a return of popular favour. On his side Lamartine, prejudiced as he was against the name the Prince bore, admits that he considered him, without exception, the most earnest and strongest statesman he had met during his long career.[1] A strong bond of natural sympathy undoubtedly existed between the two men. Both were visionaries, both professed passionate devotion to humanitarian ideals. Until the *coup d'état* (December 2, 1851) Lamartine continued friendly relations with the President, lending aid to his administration, and urging those who consulted him to work together for the good of the Republic.[2]

Although the 10th of December may be taken as the date of the final eclipse of Lamartine's political star, he occasionally took part in the debates during the opening months of 1849. But his intervention was no longer either sensational or decisive. The stage was now occupied by the Prince-President, and men such as Thiers, Molé, De Broglie, chiefs of the Right, and Ledru-Rollin and his friends, who had taken possession of the benches on the Left. Even speeches of such incontestable merit as those on the dissolution of the Assembly and the convocation of the Legislative Chamber,[3] met with but small success. The establishment of the Roman Republic and the flight of Pope Pius IX, after the assassination of Count Rossi, together with the proposed armed intervention of France in the States of the Church, lent a certain importance to his "Sur les affaires d'Italie," when he mounted the rostrum on March 8, 1849. But the spell was broken. The "Bonaparte de la parole" he had aspired to be, now made place for the Bonaparte in flesh and blood. Henri Heine had maliciously dubbed Lamartine Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, "*étranger aux affaires*." But the speech of March 8 was to vindicate triumphantly the foresight of the author of the "Manifeste à l'Europe." Moderate, almost tentative, in his appreciations, Lamartine nevertheless prognosticates the inevitable results of armed intervention at Rome. Assuming fearlessly and without equivocation the responsibility for the spirit and letter of his "Manifesto to Europe," he warns his audience that between his policy of non-intervention and the course they meditate, "il y a l'épaisseur des Alpes." [1] The international character of the Papal Government does not escape him. All Christendom is directly concerned with the matter. A Republic at Rome which banishes the Pope must, and will, cause international agitation, perhaps be productive of war in its most terrible form, that of religious fanaticism. One by one the trained diplomatist and the practical statesman takes up the issues, studying and commenting the arduous problem from all sides. The drift of his argument is manifestly against an international enforcement of the Temporal Power of the Pontiff. He recognizes the right of the inhabitants of the Roman States, as that of any other population, to select their own form of government: yet, in view of the exceptional circumstances of their situation in the eyes of the civilized world, he counsels an earnest attempt at reconcilia-

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[1] *Mémoires politiques*, vol. IV, p. 61. In the *Conseiller du peuple*, p. 183, Lamartine states: "Je ne connais pas personnellement le Président . . ."; adding, on the same page, " . . . Je crois que la République a eu la main heureuse, et qu'elle a rencontré un homme là où elle cherchait un nom! La Providence a mis sa main dans le scrutin." If this assertion that he does not know the President personally is to be taken literally, what becomes of the circumstantial story of the interview in the Bois de Boulogne? In a letter to Daniel Stern, Louis Blanc, commenting on the inaccuracies contained in Lamartine's *Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, written immediately after the events narrated (1849), calls the book "un roman inconcevable." Yet he does not for a moment doubt Lamartine's good faith, and scorns the *will* to deceive, attributing the phenomenon to the author's "prodigious faculty of self-deception." For other specimens of these mirages of the imagination cf. Sugier, *Lamartine*, pp. 301–09, whose leniency will not be shared by all readers.

[2] Cf. *Mémoires politiques*, vol. IV, p. 61; also *Correspondance*, DCCCCLI, and *Conseiller du peuple*, *passim*.

[3] January 9 and February 6, 1849.

[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. VI, p. 72.

tion. The practical solution of the difficulty adopted by the Kingdom of United Italy since 1870 would most certainly have met with his cordial approval, if we read correctly between the lines of this memorable speech.[1]

As the elections for the Legislative Chamber, which was to replace the National Assembly, approached, a fierce campaign of calumny surged about the former hero of the Hôtel de Ville. All manner of infamous accusations were revived. The epicurean orgies in which he and his colleagues were supposed to have indulged at public expense were described in detail. More to defend the reputation of the aged Dupont de l'Eure than on his own account, Lamartine deigned to take notice of these persistent rumours. In "La Presse" of May 4, 1849, he ironically gives the menu of a "banquet" in which he took part. Standing round the Council table, after *seventy-two hours* of continuous speechifying and incessant struggle with the invading mob, several of the exhausted members of the Provisional Government broke a crust of stale bread and moistened their parched lips with poor wine, served, not in glasses, but in the remains of a battered cup discovered amongst the débris which littered the room. This was the sole occasion, asserts Lamartine, on which refreshments were served at the Hôtel de Ville.[2]

Ridiculous as such accusations were, they were to bear bitter fruit. Perhaps Lamartine, despite his buoyant optimism, realized that discretion might prove the better part of valour, and that a dignified self-effacement might more efficaciously serve the cause he had at heart. The letter he addressed to the President of the Democratic Union of the Seine would seem to support this contention. "Je ne me présente pas," he informs this magnate of the electoral district, explaining his reasons for his abstention as follows: "I believe that misunderstood political men, who bear the weight of a recent responsibility in one of the crises of their country, should not provoke, but accept, the just or unjust verdict of their fellow-citizens. If I am called again, I will respond to the summons. Should I be overlooked or rejected, I shall congratulate myself on laying down the burden of my official duties. I leave everything to the spontaneous wish of the electors. Perhaps new men may be more useful to the Republic at this time than men who, if not discredited, are at least compromised by their past. Patience is also a patriotic virtue: your justice makes it easy for me." [1]

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[1] Cf. *Conseiller du peuple*, pp. 85, 119, 160, and 225; also *op. cit.* ("Le passé, le présent, et l'avenir de la république"), pp. 87–100.

[2] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. VI, p. 100.

Philosophical as are the views expressed in this letter, the humiliation Lamartine was called upon to face, as a result of the elections to the Legislative Assembly on May 18, was keenly felt. He, who a few months earlier had been triumphantly returned by ten Departments, received not a single nomination in 1849. Even Mâcon abandoned him. The birthplace of the poet-statesman, which had so recently and so enthusiastically welcomed his home-coming in October, was six months later completely in the grip of a demagogical faction, pitiless in its ostracism of the policies his moderation had advocated. The Département de Loiret (Orléans), in a bye-election, on July 13, in a measure softened the acute mortification this neglect on the part of his native town had caused, by spontaneously tendering him their representation in the Legislative Chamber. Shortly after Mâcon remorsefully sought to atone for the gratuitous insult inflicted by nominating him to a vacant seat. But he remained faithful to the generous electors of the Loiret, although physical sufferings prevented his fulfilling his duties to his constituents before February of the succeeding year (1850).[1] Yet, although he remained officially connected with his country's representation until the *coup d'état* which made Napoleon Emperor of the French, his appearances in Parliament became more and more rare. Henceforth his influence was to be exerted through the medium of journalism and that special form of popular political literature which he made his own.

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[1] *La France parlementaire*, vol. VI, p. 99.

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[1] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. VI, pp. 114, 126, 128; also *Correspondance*, DCCCCL.

CHAPTER LII

AUTHOR AND EDITOR

THE last twenty years of Lamartine's life are often termed his Calvary. With his fall from political prominence the brilliancy of his former existence gradually crumbled around him. His debts amounted in 1849 to over five million francs, and financial ruin stared him in the face. True, he still possessed vast landed estates in Burgundy, but under his peculiar form of management these became steadily a source of further embarrassment. As his pecuniary difficulties increased, the homesteads he loved passed one by one under the ruthless hammer of the auctioneer; and when finally Death found him, it was to be in a chalet at Passy, which the commiseration of the Parisian Municipal Council had placed at his disposal, together with an income for life of twenty-five thousand francs, grudgingly doled from the public funds.

Yet, distressful as were these years of incessant, superhuman literary toil, during which he laboured as a galley slave to liquidate his indebtedness, there were compensations, nay, even moments of glory, reminiscent of the triumphs of yore. But these, alas! were pale and evanescent, invariably leaving their victim ever more harassed, more hopelessly overwhelmed by the intricacies of the ruin he so nobly sought to combat. The enormous volume of his literary output between 1849 and 1869 (the year of his death) demonstrates the gigantic effort he made in his perpetual struggle with adversity. Necessarily unequal in quality the work of this period is, nevertheless, at times comparable with the best of his earlier verse and prose: a circumstance which may perhaps find its explanation in the character of the man. Sad as was his old age, Lamartine never became embittered, never morose. No rancours, no recriminations, disturbed the serene acceptance of his destiny.[1] Lord Chesterfield boasts: "Since I had the use of my reason, no human being has ever heard me laugh." Without possessing the pompous austerity of the British arbiter of deportment, Lamartine had never, even in his careless youth, been addicted to boisterous hilarity. The romantic despondency of the generation which worshipped Chateaubriand had left its mark on him. Yet the joy of living was never overpowered, even when disaster closed thickly around his disappointed ambitions. An evening spent with a couple of friends at the Palais Royal or the Variétés was a source of real pleasure and relaxation. "Lamartine riait franchement," notes Lacretelle in his volume of souvenirs.[2] The salacious wit of these joyous farces did not shock him; "but a pun," adds Lacretelle, "immediately made him serious," contortions of the language he reverenced being excessively distasteful to his sense of fitness. Such dissipations were, however, exceptional. As a rule, Lamartine preferred to receive his friends at home. "I went last night," wrote Charles Eliot Norton to Samuel Guild, on May 23, 1850, "I went last night with Count Circourt to see Lamartine, who receives visitors every evening. . . . His forehead and nose are fine, but his head is narrow, and his mouth is very weak. He is tall and has a good presence. His wife, a woman of no beauty, and whom it is said he treats with much neglect, was sitting next him on the sofa. . . . Nothing could be duller, nothing more stupid, than the manner in which the evening passed. The conversation was carried on for the most part in whispers. Lamartine was surrounded by a circle of admirers to whom he talked in a low tone of his own works. No man was ever vainer than Lamartine. His tone last night with regard to his works was that of continual praise of what he had done. . . . His house seems like a temple dedicated to his honour. I counted nine portraits of him in the room where we were. . . . I was told that in the three rooms there were twenty-two likenesses of him." The editor of these memoirs adds: "Mr. Longfellow told Charles that talking one day with Sainte-Beuve of Victor Hugo and Lamartine, he (Sainte-Beuve) quietly remarked, after saying this, that, and the other of the two authors: 'Mais charlatan pour charlatan, je préfère Lamartine.'" [1]

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[1] Doumic, *Lamartine*, p. 101.

[2] *Lamartine et ses amis*, p. 171.

While most of his compatriots will take exception to this somewhat brutally frank appreciation by a foreigner, there were many who thought as Norton did, although they dared not give open expression to their sentiments. As a matter of fact, in his own salon Lamartine reigned supreme, casting into the shade not only his wife, but all those who gravitated round the Presence. Yet a more gracious "Sovereign" it would have been difficult to conceive.[2] He invariably had a kind and courteous word for each of his guests, while for literary men of the younger generation his cordial flattery of their work was a source of encouragement, perhaps rather too indiscriminately bestowed to possess the value of absolute sincerity. As with his charities, so with his appreciations of budding talent, Lamartine was, indeed, inclined to extravagance. The jealousies and envies of the literary world were totally ignored by him. Perhaps he considered himself on so superior a plane that he could afford this luxury of universal praise. If it were so, no trace of arrogance, even of condescension, humiliated the recipient of his commendation. Was it for this reason Sainte-Beuve dubbed him "charlatan"? More lenient exponents attribute this weakness (for such it amounted to) to the goodness of his heart; to his dread of giving pain; or, when their adulation of their hero does not forbid, to a temperamental absence of the critical sense. All three hypotheses are fundamentally acceptable — possibly correct.

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[1] *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, vol. I, p. 66. Another American, Ralph Waldo Emerson, who heard Lamartine speak two years previously, writes: "Lamartine made his speech on the question of Poland. He was quite the best and indeed the only good speaker I heard in the House. He has a fine head and a free and superior style of delivery, manly and cultivated." *Journal*, vol. VII, p. 469. Describing an evening at Lamartine's, M. Édouard Grenier, in his *Souvenirs littéraires*, p. 20, says of the wife: "Elle semblait s'effacer devant le maître de la maison, comme si elle ne portait pas aussi ce grand nom. . . ." But the same author testifies concerning the absolute devotion and unquestioning admiration she bestowed upon her husband. Cf. also Count d'Alton Shée, *Mes Mémoires*, vol. II, p. 118.

[2] Cf. the souvenirs of both his secretaries, Lacretelle and Alexandre, *passim*, and the records left by P. Montarlot, *Un déjeuner chez Lamartine*, and the anonymous author of *Lamartine chez lui*, not to mention Guizot, and Dargaud, his closest friend and inseparable companion.

Like Sir Walter Scott, Lamartine determined to retrieve his fallen fortunes by means of his pen, and without loss of time he set himself resolutely to this arduous task. Undoubtedly his largesses during the months of his tenure of office in 1848 had greatly contributed to his financial distress. Édouard Grenier is authority for the assertion of Madame de Lamartine that during those months they had spent over one hundred thousand francs in charities.[1] But the root of the evil dated from a much earlier period. Already in 1835, Lamartine on several occasions informs Virieu of the serious embarrassments he experienced. "I have lost all my available capital owing to the bankruptcies and unfortunate enterprises in America"; and again: "I owe a great deal, and cannot sell." [2] His domestic expenses were never extravagant but both he and his wife were incapable of refusing pecuniary aid to applicants for loans or alms, great or small.

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[1] *Souvenirs littéraires*, p. 27.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCX and DCXI.

Nevertheless, as M. Doumic opines, and as is proved by M. Caplain's publication of his grandfather's letters and papers, the principal source of his ruin must be found in Lamartine's passion for the possession of landed property.[1] Family inheritances had brought to him large estates, nearly always encumbered, it is true; but rather than allow them to pass into other hands, he administered them himself, invariably at a loss, paying exorbitant pensions to his co-inheritors, greatly in excess of the normal yield of the property.

In the early spring of 1849 two Jews, MM. Millaud and Mirès, came to him with the proposal that he undertake, with capital furnished by them, the editorship of a periodical in which he should have entire liberty of expression. The offer was a tempting one, from both a financial and a political point of view. Standing on the brink of pecuniary ruin, with but small hope of a return of popular favour, Lamartine lent a willing ear to the plans these financiers unfolded. At a fixed salary of two thousand francs a month, a deposit which guaranteed its continuance for three years, and a contract which provided for the purchase of such original works as he might compose, he now launched forth on the troublous waters of journalism.[2] The "Conseiller du Peuple," as Lamartine baptized the venture, appeared in April, and its success was almost instantaneous. On July 27, 1849, he was able to inform M. de Champvans that he had over thirty thousand subscribers, and that before the year was out the enterprise would yield him eighty thousand francs.[3] M. de Ronchaud has aptly termed the "Conseiller du

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[1] Cf. Doumic, *Lamartine*, p. 103, and Jules Caplain, *Édouard Dubois et Lamartine*, *passim*.

[2] Cf. Alexandre, *op. cit.*, p. 163; and *Mémoires politiques*, vol. IV, p. 63.

[3] *Correspondance*, DCCCCL and DCCCCLI, in which last the figures are somewhat reduced. In his *Cours de littérature*, vol. X, p. 227, Lamartine mentions fifty thousand subscribers.

Peuple" "un cours familier de morale et de politique républicaine." And the critic adds that there is something excessively pathetic in witnessing the efforts of this former dictator, abandoned by the people, who nevertheless undertakes to explain to them the beauties of this very suffrage which had proved his undoing. One feels that he has little hope of himself seeing the fruits of his labour: he sows for posterity. During those strenuous days when Lamartine toiled so incessantly to enlighten the masses, he clearly demonstrated that he was not working from personal ambition, but that all his policy had in view the sole and lofty aim of progress and humanity.[1]

There is an essay in one of the numbers of the "Conseiller du Peuple" (the Ninth Counsel), entitled "Atheism among the People," which is deserving of frequent re-reading in our own days.[2] "I have often asked myself, 'Why am I a Republican?'" writes Lamartine. "Why am I the partisan of equitable Democracy, organized and established as a good and strong government? Why have I a real love of the People — a love always serious, and sometimes even tender? What has the People done for me?" Lamartine answers these self-imposed questions by stating that the love of the people is the direct consequence of his belief in God, and goes on to define the correlation between his duties towards the one and the other. "Private Duties" and "Collective Duties," as he terms them, go hand in hand, and Atheism is the foe of both. "Atheism and Republicanism are two words which exclude each other. Absolutism may thrive without a God, for it needs only slaves. Republicanism cannot exist without a God, for it must have citizens." The thesis hinges on the contention that without a religious basis, the whole fabric of political liberty must fall to pieces, undermined as it will inevitably be by the selfish and unscrupulous machinations of anarchical demagogues and tyrants, as was the case in 1793. "Thus end atheistic revolutions!" he warns. "If you wish that this revolution [that of 1848] should not have the same end, beware of abject materialism, degrading sensualism, gross socialism, of besotted communism. . . ." The essay contains no new ideals, perhaps; is in fact a recapitulation of the theories Lamartine had preached continuously since his advent to political life. Nevertheless, its importance is great, synthetic as it is of his political creed and complementary to his "Politique rationnelle," of 1831.

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[1] Cf. Introduction to *La Politique de Lamartine*, p. lxxxii.

[2] Translated in 1850 by Edward E. Hale and Francis Le Baron, and published in Boston that same year.

Yet despite his professed (and certainly sincere) love of the people, Lamartine was human. Deep down in his soul there slumbered an essentially human resentment against this same people, whose blind fanaticism had preferred the name of Napoleon to the Nation's saviour when the Revolution of February threatened the peace, not only of France, but of Europe. Dargaud claims that Lamartine's determination never wavered, once he had renounced his political ambitions. When attempts were made to entice him to reënter the lists, he told his friend that he knew too well the worth of the popularity offered him even to listen to the blandishments of those who sought his aid. "I despise popularity," he sneered. "And you may be certain that I will never follow them as the lightning follows the rod, down into the gutter." [1] Another proof of the profound disgust his fallacious popularity now aroused in him can be found in his vehement ejaculation in the presence of Alexandre, after reciting his magnificent verses, addressed to Count d'Orsay on receiving the bust the latter had made of him. All readers of Lamartine will remember the poem, which begins: —

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[1] Cf. Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 432, who cites from Dargaud's *Journal.*

> "Quand le bronze, écumant dans son moule d'argile,
> Léguera par ta main mon image fragile
> A l'œil indifférent des hommes qui naîtront,
> Et que, passant leurs doigts dans ces tempes ridées
> Comme un lit dévasté du torrent des idées,
> Pleins de doute, ils diront entre eux: De qui ce front?"

The passionate lines are symptomatic of the bitterness gnawing at his soul; an outcry against the injustice of his contemporaries. He urges Phidias (d'Orsay) to break the image and destroy the fragments, lest posterity subject him to further humiliations. "From Olympus to the gutter; from glory to oblivion," has he fallen.

> "Au pilori du temps n'expose pas mon ombre!
> Je suis las des soleils, laisse mon urne à l'ombre:
> Le bonheur de la mort, c'est d'être enseveli."

. . . .

> "Je ne veux de vos bruits qu'un souffle dans la brise
> Un nom inachevé dans un cœur qui se brise!
> J'ai vécu pour la foule, et je veux dormir seul." [1]

These immortal verses were composed at Monceau, on October 4, 1850, within the space of an hour. The family had sat down to breakfast, but Lamartine failed to appear. Finally, the clatter of his wooden shoes was heard on the stone flags of the corridor, and entering with bowed head, the master silently took his place at table. Still vibrating with the intense emotion the sublime inspiration had occasioned, he left the dishes offered him untasted. At last he rose, and standing by the hearth, solemnly recited his magnificent protest. Alexandre avers that all present were moved to tears. It was a new man who was suddenly revealed to them: "a Michel-Angelo," whose words seemed fashioned in bronze or marble. It was the supreme renunciation of worldly ambitions, intermingled with expressions of disgust at the ingratitude of his generation, the climax ringing like an anathema in the haughty pride of the closing verse: —

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[1] *Recueillements poétiques.*

> "J'ai vécu pour la foule, et je veux dormir seul!"

Springing to their feet the guests crowded round the poet, giving utterance to their admiration. But Lamartine waved them aside, muttering contemptuously: "C'est un sublime va te faire f.... lancé au peuple!"[1]

The provocation had, indeed, been great. During the autumn pedlars had hawked about the countryside insulting pamphlets and ribald popular songs, besmirching the honour and integrity of the great tribune; penetrating even to the gates of his dwelling. He was compared to Màndrin, the famous highwayman of the eighteenth century, and accused of the most monstrous crimes.[2] The peasants did not know what to think of their "Monsieur Alphonse," as political agents painted his actions in the darkest colours, offering proof that he had betrayed the people's cause for lucre. Nothing could have been more painful to Lamartine than the loss of the time-honoured esteem and affection of the humble dwellers on his estates who had known him as boy and man and had so proudly followed his brilliant career. Père Dutemps, of the "Cours de littérature," is very probably a composite character, symbolic of the hundreds who lived upon his bounty. If so, Lamartine "created" him out of the anguish of his own soul, as he did "Geneviève," "Claude des Huttes," and others, expressing through these his faith, his religion, at once practical and mystical, and the noble aspirations he had preached in vain to living men.[3]

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[1] Alexandre, *Souvenirs sur Lamartine*, p. 237. The coarse epithet is best translated as "go and be damned"; but the obscenity of the French expression has no exact English equivalent.

[2] Cf. *Cours de littérature*, vol. III, p. 219.

[3] Cf. Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 427.

Charles Alexandre has left us a vivid picture of these closing days of 1849 and the winter and early spring of 1850; days passed in comparative solitude and neglect at Saint-Point or Monceau. The monotony of this exile was broken in January by the arrival of the great actor, Frédéric Lemaître, who came with the publisher, Michel Lévy, to settle final details concerning the mounting, in Paris, of Lamartine's drama "Toussaint Louverture," produced at the Porte Saint-Martin Theatre, on April 6, 1850. The less said about this play, the better. Even the enthusiastic and loyal Alexandre acknowledges it to have been a "victoire politique plus que dramatique"; adding that its principal success was that it caused a popular reaction in favour of the "great victim of 1848." [1] Lamartine himself entertained but a poor opinion of the literary merits of his work. "C'est une dramaturgie pour les yeux du peuple. Elle avait été écrite pour cette fin," he wrote M. Aubel shortly after its production.[2] And a couple of days later he informed his friend, M. Rolland, that the play had endowed him with a halo, and, in conjunction with the part he had taken in Parliament in the discussion on the railway from Paris to Avignon,[3] had caused an immense reflux of popular favour. The people had had enough of democratic flatterers; they sought a statesman strong enough to condemn their follies. "Il lève les yeux sur moi." [4]

Alas, once more he grossly deceived himself. The popularity he still craved was gone forever: but it was only in the late autumn of this same year (1850) that he openly admitted the abandonment of his cherished dream in the despondent verses addressed to Count d'Orsay.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 202; cf. also Lacretelle, *op. cit.*, p. 214, who substantiates this assertion. Cf. also *Souvenirs de Frédéric Lemaître*, p. 296, who says: "Le succès resta au-dessous de ce poème grandiose. . . ."

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCCLXI.

[3] Cf. *La France parlementaire*.

[4] *Correspondance*, DCCCCXII.

But the splendid qualities of his race asserted themselves even in this hour of painful darkness and despair. Downed in one direction, the fighter he was turned his face to the world, fully armed for the long and inglorious struggle to free himself from debt. "My political life is over," he had written Émile de Girardin at the end of 1849. "The country has no need of me, even entertains repulsion for me. I do not wish to do violence to this feeling. I contest nothing, and I dream of Asia."[1] There had been ups and downs since then, semblances of returning popularity, but even his inveterate optimism could not fail to note the general indifference which was clouding round his name. "Without me Europe would be in ashes, France in ruins, and reasonable liberty lost for half a century," he wrote the Marquis Capponi, on June 20, 1850.[2] Nor did he exaggerate unduly the restraining influence he had exerted. But times were now changed; France had made her choice, and must abide by the issue. At any rate, he was right in his belief that it would be folly to do violence to the feeling of hostility his political moderation had given rise to. Hence the longing for the Orient.

In a confidential postscript to a letter to M. Champvans, dated from Paris on July 27, 1849, Lamartine states that after liquidating his estates, he is fully determined to expatriate himself in Asia Minor. "J'irai y végéter et y mourir."[3] France had been ungrateful, and left her fallen hero to extricate himself as best he could from the mire of debt. From an unexpected quarter, however, a helping hand was stretched out to him. As a token of his admiration for the poet and his gratitude to the statesman who had invariably befriended Turkey, the Sultan Abdul Medjid had ceded to Lamartine, for a period of twenty-five years, the vast estate of Burghasova, near Smyrna. It needed but a touch of his vivid imagination to transform this agricultural concession into a veritable Peru. Already he saw himself the possessor of untold wealth; a petty sovereign receiving the dutiful homage of the district, garbed in Oriental splendour.[1] Yet, before undertaking a voyage of inspection to his newly acquired kingdom, certain financial transactions were necessary. Failing funds, Lamartine immediately sought, first, to procure a sum, over one hundred thousand francs, to defray the expenses of the journey; and, secondly, to form a financial syndicate to exploit the natural resources of his vast domain. That he was able to borrow the first-mentioned sum seems certain from the contents of several letters of the period;[2] but the half-million or more he estimated as indispensable for working expenses were not forthcoming, although he hoped to raise this amount in London on his return.

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCCLVI.

[2] *Ibid.*, DCCCCLXVI. A month before he had told M. Rolland that he would bravely "take the helm" should he be called upon to do so. Cf. *ibid.*, DCCCCLXIV.

[3] *Ibid.*, DCCCCL.

Nevertheless, a start was made. On June 21, 1850, M. and Madame de Lamartine, accompanied by their friends, the Baron de Chamborant and M. de Champeaux, set out for Constantinople on the steamship *Oronte*. At Marseilles, where they took ship, the popular reception accorded Lamartine assumed the aspect of a public ovation. The streets and quays were thronged with admirers who lavished affectionate greetings, belying the accounts published by hostile Parisian newspapers as to the universal spread of his unpopularity in France.[3]

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[1] Alexandre, *op. cit.*, p. 194. The Baron de Chamborant de Périssat, who accompanied Lamartine on his second voyage to the East, spells the name of the property near Smyrna, Burgaz-Owa. Cf. his *Lamartine inconnu, passim.*

[2] *Correspondance,* DCCCCLXII–XVI.

[3] Cf. Chamborant, *op. cit.*, p. 28; and also Lamartine's *Correspondance,* DCCCCLXVI.

A brief sojourn was made at Constantinople, in order that Lamartine might personally thank the Sultan for his generosity. After a cordial audience, the party lost no time in setting out for Smyrna.[1] Here a caravan was formed, and within twenty-four hours the travellers reached the smiling plain of Burghas-ova. Two letters written from this spot, on July 16 and 17, respectively, show the enthusiasm the prospect excited in the new owner's breast. To Dargaud and Dubois he confides his delight. The circumference of his principality is between twenty-eight and thirty leagues, including the chain of fertile hills which surround it. On all sides gush streams of water, facilitating irrigation. "There is a fortune in it under forty or fifty forms," he assured Dargaud, while to Dubois he asserts that the herds of cattle alone will yield from fifty to one hundred per cent on the outlay.[2]

The return journey to Marseilles was saddened by the death, at sea, of M. de Champeaux, who would seem to have contracted a fever at Piræus. Deeply affected though he was by this event, Lamartine determined to push actively the financial development of his concession, and with this aim in view he started for London. "With a capital of half a million francs, one is certain of an annual return, within three years, of between four and six hundred thousand. . . ." [3] Alas! The English bankers failed to share his enthusiasm, while financiers in France proved equally sceptical. Failing in his repeated attempts to raise the necessary capital, Lamartine was eventually constrained to abandon the enterprise, gratefully accepting, in lieu of his concession, a life pension from the Sultan of a little over twenty-five thousand francs. Thus evaporated another of the dreams of fabulous wealth which had persistently haunted him since the days of his youth; as when he proposed to Virieu that they found an agricultural colony on a desert island off the coast of Tuscany.[1]

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[1] Cf. *Nouveau Voyage en Orient*, p. 63 *et seq.*; also Chamborant, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCCLXVIII–IX.

[3] *Ibid.*, DCCCCLXXII. For details of M. de Champeaux's death cf. Alexandre, *Madame de Lamartine*, p. 162.

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[1] *Correspondance*, CLXX, January, 1819; cf. also Lacretelle (*op. cit.*, p. 180), who gives curious details of Lamartine's theories on finance. "I shall always arrange so as to have two hundred thousand francs of debts. For Governments as for private individuals debt is a stimulus necessary for production," etc., etc.

CHAPTER LIII

YEARS OF ADVERSITY

UNTIL the *coup d'état* of December 2, 1851, demonstrated the futility of his struggle, Lamartine had actively continued his republican propaganda in the "Conseiller du Peuple." When stepping down from the heights to which a now vanished popular confidence had raised him, he had, indeed, assured his hearers that the evening of his life would be illumined only by "the lamp of the sanctuary and of the hearth"; adding: "J'ai été le bruit et le mouvement pendant quelques heures, je serai le silence et l'hymne à mon tour. Un peu de ce siècle porte mon nom, c'est assez; c'est l'heure de se taire, de disparaître et de se préparer au grand pas de l'éternité." [1] Henceforth his existence was to be completely dominated by his literary activity and his well-nigh superhuman efforts to retrieve, or alleviate, financial ruin. "December second was fatal to Lamartine," writes Alexandre; [2] and Dargaud confirms the statement: "M. de Lamartine, still unable to walk, dragged himself to my room, which adjoined his own, when on the morning of the third he received the fateful tidings. . . . He was extremely pale, but calm. I realized the depth of his emotion by the lividness of his countenance and the tremor in his voice. He deplored not having been able to be present at his post at such an issue. 'Bless Providence rather,' said I, 'that this illness prevented your attempting a manifestly impotent action. We are no longer in 1848. The people have deserted their own cause and are one with their oppressors.' He admitted all this, yet persisted in his regret that he had been unable to do his duty, even had it only been on a barricade." [1] Lacretelle, who was with Lamartine on the day the news of the *coup d'état* reached him, gives a vivid picture of the explosion of wrath to which the infuriated poet gave vent. He inveighed against Louis Napoleon as "one of those wild beasts which from time to time abandon their lair disguised as man, and are called Tiberius, Nero, Caracalla." "Our race is cursed," he continued, as he excitedly paced the room, knocking over furniture in his wild anger. "He will bring upon us a second invasion," he prophetically announced. "He will be the Emperor of the demagogues!" Moreover, Lamartine believed, or feigned to believe, that his own assassination by order of the Emperor would be one of the sequels of this bloody betrayal of the Republic.[2]

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[1] Cf. *Mémoires politiques*, vol. IV, p. 462.

[2] *Souvenirs sur Lamartine*, p. 313.

Nor was the cup of bitterness drained for him. The Republican party, which, with Lamartine, had foreseen the inevitable consequence of Louis Napoleon's election to the Presidency, suspected their former leader of voluntary desertion.[3] Even such an old friend as the poet Béranger wrote Dargaud, confessing that he had believed the origin of Lamartine's attack of rheumatism to have been "political." His speech of October 6, 1848, insisting upon the right of the people to choose their President, was now interpreted against him. He was held responsible in some quarters for the triumph of the very man he sought to ostracize. Noting this current of public opinion, or a fraction of it, Lamartine had written to Émile de Girardin, three months before the *coup d'état:* ". . . Je ne voudrais ni vivre ni mourir avec le soupçon d'avoir changé la République en bonapartisme dans son berceau." [1] He himself realized that an excess of liberty in 1848 was accountable for the present reaction, and that the punishment of the Demagogues who had misled the people was to be a period of despotism.[2] "I am neutral now, and have abdicated all ambition," he told Circourt, on his return from the East; [3] and he kept his word, refusing to listen to the blandishments of the Imperial régime, which sought to corrupt him with the offer of a seat in the Senate — even with the Presidency of that body. His neutrality was sincere. Once the "titanic" outburst of his anger had subsided, he accepted passively the rule of the Master France had given herself, wasting no words in idle recrimination. But he was a broken man: the illusions of his political faith gone forever; the burden of his financial distress crushing more heavily day by day. "Je suis devenu athée en politique," he impulsively announced to M. Dubois, as one by one the men he had counted upon in 1848 allowed themselves to become fascinated by the new régime.[4]

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[1] Cited from *Journal* by Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 429.

[2] Lacretelle, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

[3] "Accusez-moi, l'avenir me vengera," he wrote to Madame Duport. *Correspondance*, DCCCCXIV.

In his monograph M. René Doumic is of the opinion that never did the noble figure of Lamartine appear more majestic than during these years of adversity.[5] Yes, and no. There are incidents which can only be characterized as deplorable, as, for example, the often undignified and repeated solicitations for the public bounty, in the form either of lotteries or of subscriptions for his collected works. The psychology of this peculiar trait of his nature is portrayed in M. Jean des Cognets' criterion: "When misfortune finally obliged him to solicit in his turn the charity of others, he was only half sorry. To implore the pity of people is, after all, only another form of asking for a gage of love. After having during thirty years drawn hearts to him by means of his genius, in his old age he attracts them through his distress. What does it matter, so long as they are moved by his appeal? Let them humiliate him, provided they love him!" [1] Many will see in this apology conclusive proof of Lamartine's insatiable vanity: a vanity which called for his perpetual presence on the stage, even when the limelight disclosed the rags which had replaced the splendour of his prime. To pose as the victim of his countrymen's ingratitude was certainly one of Lamartine's foibles: a phase of his character one would fain ignore. On the other hand, none can refuse their sincere admiration of the cheerfulness and moral courage displayed in the face of an ever-increasing, never-ending daily toil. "Autrefois je vivais pour travailler," sighed Lamartine; "maintenant je travaille pour vivre." The day after an especially tragic scene with a creditor, ended by one of those usual expedients which in the long run only added to his embarrassments, but which afforded temporary respite, he wrote Dargaud: "Absolute distress! Add to this neuralgia tortures in the stomach and head fit to kill one of my Smyrna buffaloes, and more than sixteen printed pages knocked off every morning. *Et sempre bene!* Ready to laugh when you want to. I prefer that to whimpering."[2] The same year (1850) to Dubois (who had presumably scolded over some inconsequence): "In the name of Heaven, don't demoralize me. When a man is swimming for his life, one must support him, not press upon his shoulders. I fully realize my difficulties. If I dwelt upon them, they would become impossibilities." [3]

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[1] *Correspondance*, DCCCCLXXXIX.

[2] *Ibid.*, DCCCCXCIII.

[3] *Ibid.*, DCCCCLXXVIII.

[4] Cf. J. Caplain, *Édouard Dubois et Lamartine*, p. 29.

[5] *Lamartine*, p. 101.

The incorrigible prodigal was fully aware of the peril of his situation; but he persistently refused to recognize its hopelessness. Private charities on a scale totally disproportionate with his income, often savouring of ostentation, indeed; largess bestowed without rhyme or reason on strangers and undeserving mendicants having no claim on his bounty, but who happened to be cognizant of the usual Sunday distribution of ready cash; the thousand and one petty demands made upon his private purse; all these contributed, and had for years past contributed, to his difficulties. But, as has been said, there were other and greater drains, caused by his generous interpretation of family obligations and the administration of his rural estates. No compliment had flattered him more than when Madame de Girardin (if memory serves) had styled him "le plus grand agriculteur de France." Perhaps he was. But his methods were not calculated to increase his fortune. In the district where he lived, custom, among the larger landed proprietors of the Mâconnais, afforded certain facilities to the vintners, advancing ready money on their crops, or purchasing them outright before the vintage. Partly from goodness of heart, partly also for speculative reasons, Lamartine followed this tradition, not prudently as did his neighbours, but with his usual impetuosity and sanguine confidence in his financial acumen. In nine cases out of ten he gave a price far beyond the market value, and as often eventually resold his wines at a loss. In vain did M. Dubois point out to him that the peasants of his countryside were becoming capitalists at his expense, and that these so-called speculations were inevitably ruinous, adding with infallible regularity a deficit to his account. " You need between eighty and one hundred thousand francs for your annual expenses," argued the prudent M. Dubois. "Keep Saint-Point to live and die in; but sell Monceau and Milly, which are heavy encumbrances in your budget. What you make by your pen, dispose of according to your fantasy, by which I mean your liberality and exhaustless charity" — to which excellent advice Lamartine gruffly replied: "You have wounded and humiliated me: leave me." [1] But, although he declined to accept the counsel Dubois offered, Lamartine almost immediately repented his hasty words, and to the end gave him every token of his esteem and affection. To the formation of a syndicate which should take over the administration of his affairs, paying him a handsome annuity, he was equally obdurate, affirming his ability to liberate himself from the crushing burden alone and unaided.[2]

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[1] *La vie intérieure de Lamartine*, p. 439.

[2] Cited by Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 441.

[3] *Correspondance*, DCCCCLXXIII.

With the *coup d'état* the "Conseiller du Peuple" ceased publication, and his daily newspaper, "Le Pays," founded as a parliamentary organ for the diffusion of republican theories, soon shared the same fate. Nothing daunted, Lamartine turned with redoubled energy to purely literary composition, piling up volume upon volume of historical treatises (monumental works such as his "Histoire de la Restauration" and "Histoire de Turquie," each in six octavo tomes) or semi-imaginative sketches and personal reminiscences of his youth, such as "Les Nouvelles Confidences," "Le Nouveau Voyage en Orient," and a dozen others, to which must be added the "Civilisateur," [3] a periodical of a non-political character, designed to replace the defunct "Conseiller" as a breadwinner. The venture was, however, short-lived, and was followed, in 1854, by an instructive and essentially moral little volume (totally forgotten to-day), entitled "Lecture pour tous."

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[1] Cf. Caplain, *op. cit.*, p. 112, letter from M. Dubois to Madame Valentine de Cessiat. In a letter of M. de Chamborant, dated November 9, 1853, Lamartine writes: "Not only have I had no crop with my seventy vintners, but I must support a hundred families during a year. Result: a difference of one hundred and fifty thousand francs: but I shall hold out. Glory to God, and expressions of gratitude to my publishers!" *Lamartine inconnu*, p. 125.

[2] Lacretelle, *op. cit.*, p. 180. In 1866 Lamartine wrote to M. de Chamborant that he had "effectivement payé plus de six millions en quatorze ans d'efforts surhumains," and without receiving one sou from the Government. Cf. *Lamartine inconnu*, p. 272.

[3] "Mon seul salut ici-bas," as he wrote Pelletan (cf. *Correspondance*, M.); adding in a letter to De la Grange: "Mon seul moyen de salut et de libération." *Correspondance*, MII.

Years of incessant literary slavery, these; of desperate effort and perpetual disappointment. Well might he write to the faithful Dubois: "Quant à la politique, je m'en fiche, et je suis à peu près comme le pays. Je pense à moi et à ceux qui vivent de moi." [1] Up at four or five o'clock in the morning the year round, Lamartine bent over his table grinding out the pages which were to save him and his family from ruin. "This morning I began work for 'Le Siècle,'" he wrote M. Rolland in 1852. "Never did a man more ill take up the spade. I can take no food, have no sleep, am tortured by a serious malady of the stomach and by universal rheumatism. But the greatest evil is my purse: could the emptiness be seen it would make one shudder. Nevertheless, I pay my vintner, but there is nothing left for others." [2] "All very sad," he writes Dargaud a month later; "but not hopeless so long as there is a God in Heaven, friends on earth, a horse in the stable, a dog on the hearth-stone, and a white page to be blackened on my table." [3] And he informs his friend that within twenty-nine days he has completed and forwarded to his publisher a volume of four hundred and twenty pages ("Histoire de la Restauration"), and that he begins another on the morrow.

Charles Alexandre and Madame de Lamartine are admirable and indefatigable secretaries, often composing whole pages themselves, which pass later as the Master's work,[4] but the brunt falls upon the shoulders of the solitary toiler crouching over the fire in his turret-chamber at Saint-Point, or in the damp little study on the ground floor of the rue de la Ville-l'Évêque, where Lamartine had taken refuge on leaving the magnificent apartment in the rue de l'Université after his financial reverses (1853–54).

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[1] Caplain, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

[2] *Correspondance*, DCCCCXCV.

[3] *Correspondance*, DCCCCXVII.

[4] Cf. Alexandre, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

His indomitable courage and exhaustless optimism are exemplified in an anecdote related by Dr. Poumiès de la Siboutie, who visited him a little later. Lamartine wished to hire the fourth floor of the house in order to instal under the same roof the offices of the "Cours de littérature," which had just begun publication and already boasted twenty thousand subscribers at twenty francs each. "My affairs are bad," asserted Lamartine; "but I am not ruined. I owe two millions, but I shall make one million this year. And if God grants me life and health, I have the certainty of freedom from debt within three years. Then I shall still have my pension of twenty thousand francs from Turkey, an income of thirty thousand a year belonging to my wife, and my estates, which are worth seven hundred thousand at least. They urge me to sell my estates, believing me to be a poor manager. But I am convinced nobody could make them yield more than I do. Besides, I have about twenty families who work for me and for themselves. The sale of my property would reduce them to beggary." [1]

But, despite superhuman efforts, the fatal moment when he must perforce part with his estates was fast approaching. In 1857 he had paid off over one million francs of his indebtedness, it is true. But the operation had only been consummated through a series of expedients which in reality left him even more inextricably entangled. "J'arrive achevé, fini, ruiné, anéanti," he wrote confidentially to Chamborant from Monceau, on February 11, 1857; and the same letter contains mention of the imminent catastrophe. Tentatively he urges his correspondent to sound M. de Morny and to ascertain through him whether the Emperor would grant permission for a lottery ("seule voie qui soit libératrice") for the disposal of his estates.[1] His belief in the love of the people of France never deserted him: that the public he had so generously served in 1848 would come forward to aid him in his distress, was to his mind a certainty. "Si l'autorisation est refusée," he wrote Chamborant a week later, "il y aura une grande *peine* dans le pays."[2] Difficulties of all sorts arose, however, many of such a humiliating nature that Lamartine himself preferred to have the scheme abandoned, determined as he was to accept no favours which might compromise his political dignity.

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[1] *Souvenirs d'un médecin de Paris*, p. 357.

A little later (March 19, 1858) some of the leading citizens of Mâcon were successful in obtaining administrative authority for the launching of a national subscription for the relief of their distinguished citizen, threatened with bankruptcy. Favourably received at first, the idea soon gave rise to inevitable political complications. The Emperor's letter, published on March 27, lending his support to the subscription with an offering of ten thousand francs, was seized upon by his enemies as a pretext for their own abstention. Royalists, Orleanists, and Republicans took umbrage at the Imperial patronage. Perhaps Madame de Lamartine was not far wrong when she wrote: "Party spirit governs everything: or at least each one finds therein an excuse to do *nothing*, and even to glorify their abstention." [3] There can be no doubt that the Emperor's action hurt the scheme, but there were other considerations, not the least of which was universal indifference, mingled with political distrust. On two occasions the Emperor had, indeed, offered to pay Lamartine's debts out of his privy purse. Twice these magnanimous offers had been courteously declined.[1] To accept two millions of francs from the private generosity of the man he had done his utmost to foil in his political ambitions was certainly an impossibility. Lamartine, who prized the judgment of posterity even more than the opinion of his contemporaries, could hardly consent to such a humiliation. It is even difficult to conceive how he could have tolerated the Emperor's personal support of the National subscription. But he did: and bitter reproaches were inevitably levelled against him. There is a passage in a letter to Chamborant, dated September 9, 1858, which goes far to prove that Lamartine sincerely believed that the product of the public subscription was incontestably his due for *services rendered*. It is hardly to his credit; yet strict impartiality forbids its suppression. "The General Council of Saône et Loire," it runs, "which is indebted to me for the forty millions of revenue derived from the two railway lines, had the cowardice to pass me over in silence [in reference to subscription]. The countryside is indignant: here [at Monceau] I have been welcomed by the peasants as an unhappy friend whose misfortune increases their sympathy."[2]

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[1] *Lamartine inconnu*, p. 178.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

[3] Letter cited by Chamborant, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

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[1] Cf. *Mémoires politiques*, vol. IV, p. 67; also Chamborant, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

[2] *Lamartine inconnu*, p. 193. The letter continues with an optimistic estimation of his financial status, improved by one million within ten months. "This gives me hope for 1859." In Paris the announcement of the subscription produced very different results. M. Jean des Cognets (*op. cit.*, p. 449) states that newspapers of all shades of opinion were merciless. The *Figaro* informed its readers that Lamartine walked the streets of Paris clothed in rags in order to soften the hearts of possible subscribers. "Oh, charitable folk," he was represented as praying: "one more million, if you please, in order that I may save my ancestral fire-dogs." The Legitimist and Catholic press was most cruel. The subscription earned for Lamartine a greater crop of insults than of cash. Lord Normanby, on April 3, 1858, addressed from Florence a letter in which, together with a subscription of one thousand francs, he expressed his admiration for the man who had done so much for the salvation of society and of order. Cf. Alexandre, *Madame de Lamartine*, p. 214. In London the subscription had considerable success in spite of the hostile attitude of a portion of the English press. Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 215.

M. de Chamborant corroborates Lamartine's complaint; asserting that the Prefects were responsible for this almost universal action, in the belief that their course would be agreeable to the Government, which, although it had authorized the subscription, preferred a negative result.[1] Whatever the reasons advanced by the Government may have been, the national subscription was a dismal failure. In a note to Dubois (marked "secret") Lamartine specifically states that the Imperial letter and contribution of ten thousand francs "nous tue à moitié ou aux trois quarts." Without the unfortunate letter he asserts that "two millions would certainly have been subscribed."[2] And he adds: "On m'offre trois millions par le gouvernement et le corps législatif. Je ne veux pas, mais taisez-vous. L'honneur avant la vie." This would seem to lend substance to the belief that the Government, fearing a recrudescence of Lamartine's popularity, sought to ensnare his political independence, and by an act of significant generosity bind him morally to the Imperial régime. The above-quoted letter clearly demonstrates that, dire as was his distress, Lamartine would never have lent himself to such a Machiavelian combination, sacrifice his dignity as he might in appeals to the charity of the people.

The mournful little volume which M. Maurice Barrès published, under the title of "L'Abdication du Poète" (1914), is of unquestionable psychological value, despite the sombreness of its conclusions. Dealing exclusively with the Lamartine posterior to 1848, the writer dwells principally on the gradual transformation of his political, religious, and literary characteristics after the middle fifties until his death in 1869. Here and there rays of light are discernible in M. Barrès' appreciations; but on the whole, the noble figure is decked in too gloomy garb. "Lamartine pourquoi renier ton âme!" exclaims M. Barrès in the opening sentence of the chapter headed "Le Désespéré." [1] The poetic vein was not exhausted. Some of the most sublimely beautiful verses date from this period of prosaic literary slavery to which the aged poet was doomed in order to secure his material existence.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 192; also letter from Madame de Lamartine on the same subject, cited by Chamborant, p. 193.

[2] Caplain, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

Charles Alexandre has drawn a pathetic picture of one of these instances of the revival of the divine inflatus. Entering the bare little vaulted study at Saint-Point, as the dusk was gathering on a late September evening in 1856, the secretary found his revered friend, head in hands, bowed over his desk. At his feet lay a couple of greyhounds, the inseparable companions of an adored master. The little room itself contained but scant furniture or decoration: two or three well-worn armchairs, a small divan, and the writing-table. Behind the owner's seat hung a shelf of books and a print of Lord Byron: opposite, on either side of the chimney-piece, well in view, were portraits of the poet's mother and his daughter Julia. After a few cordial words of greeting, Lamartine took up the sheets covered with his rapid, graceful, essentially feminine handwriting, offering to read the work on which he had been engaged. The little den was plunged in gloom, and the poet leant against the window to catch the last fading rays of light. A stone's throw before him was the humble village church, separated from the park by the wall in which was built the tombs of his mother and child. As Alexandre puts it: "La poésie était religieuse comme la scène," for the verses were entitled, "Le Désert ou l'Immortalité de Dieu." [2]

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 75.

[2] Cf. *Recueillements poëtiques*, XIX; also Alexandre, *Souvenirs sur Lamartine*, p. 345.

LAMARTINE'S STUDY AT SAINT-POINT

A mosaic of all the shifting opinions and episodes of his life, a medley of public affairs and personal doubts and anguish of soul, Lamartine moulds the mass of sensations and sentiments into a compact whole, uplifting and spiritualizing its essence, and clothing it with metaphysical significance. He had been a dutiful Christian; had later denied Revelation, seeking in reason a definition of God: to-day he bows reverently before the Mystery which man cannot penetrate. Analyzing the various emotions depicted in the poem, M. Barrès discovers at its close Lamartine standing alone, far above man and mundane events: "C'est un ascète tout prêt à ne plus aimer que *L'Imitation*." [1]

That same autumn of 1856, another sublime inspiration came to the weary poet. One afternoon at Milly, the home of his childhood, was born "La Vigne et la Maison," which some critics and most lovers of Lamartine rank amongst the most exquisite of his imperishable harmonies. The same evening, on his return to Monceau, he read the beautiful lines to the charmed circle which gathered round him.[2] But such "dialogues" between his soul and his material self were rare nowadays. The cruel labour necessitated by his daily "copy" forbade flights into ethereal realms his fancy still yearned for. As Théophile Gautier has it: "Pégase traçait son sillon, traînant une charrue que d'un coup d'aile il eut emportée dans les étoiles."[3] The arduous mental application of such compilations as his "Histoire de la Restauration" and the volumes on Turkish history, not to speak of the preparation of that "last hope," the "Cours de littérature," absorbed his energies. Pegasus was, indeed, harnessed to the plough: the stars were now far beyond his reach.

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[1] *L'Abdication du poète*, p. 77. During his last years this little volume, which had belonged to his mother, says M. Dubois, was ever at his bedside.

[2] Cf. Alexandre, *op. cit.*, p. 352; also *Recueillements*, XVII.

[3] *Portraits contemporains*, p. 180.

CHAPTER LIV

THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

In the closing pages of his "Mémoires politiques" Lamartine, referring to his final venture, "Cours familier de littérature," states that, thanks to advertisements in the newspapers, he was successful in collecting twenty thousand subscriptions for his publication. Of these he estimates ten thousand as resident in France, while the other half were scattered in North and South America and various European countries. On paper the assured circulation of the magazine showed an annual income of about four hundred thousand francs; but the estimate proved to be far in excess of the reality. As far as transatlantic countries were concerned, the enterprise was a dismal failure; the French subscribers alone saving him from absolute ruin. A complete edition of his collected works in forty octavo volumes was now undertaken, and on this he also built fantastic speculations. "If nothing interferes with these different enterprises," he writes, "and which cost me between four and five hundred thousand francs a year, I flatter myself that after ten years of assiduous labour, I shall have paid off my five million two hundred thousand francs of debts, thanks to the liberality of the friends I have kept in my country and in Europe."[1]

It was a broken man of over seventy years of age who penned these pathetic words; to which he added: "*Mendier pour soi* est une honte; *mendier pour les autres* est une consolation. . . . I shall die poor and naked, but I shall have reduced no one to poverty." It seems incredible that his optimism should survive the stark realities which hedged him in: loss of popularity, loss of fortune, failing health! His courage partook of the heroic, his faith in his ability to retrieve his fallen fortune was colossal; yet, naïve to the extent of puerility, Lamartine has been held up to ridicule by his foes on account of his insensate passion for publicity, one form of which, and a ruinous one, was the advertisement of his books. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to buy a whole page in a leading journal and therein advertise his works. He would sit gloatingly before the page, fascinated by the contemplation of his name, printed in gigantic type. "L'annonce est un art inventé par Girardin, et accompli par Lamartine," he proudly assured his friends when they remonstrated at his extravagances.[1] To which, when hard pressed, he added: "I am obliged to clang the brazen gong of publicity; God Himself has need of bells." Alexandre would seem to discern in the reliance on the efficacy of advertisement a decline in his trust of self. "Il y croyait plus qu'en lui-même," sadly confesses the loyal secretary.[2] The admission is significant, coming from such a source; goes far, indeed, towards invalidating the preceding assertion concerning the magnificent self-assurance of the struggling victim. Yet the distinction is more apparent than real. Of moral abdication there was no trace: the commercialism of Lamartine had more lofty aims in view than the mere accumulation of lucre. "Poor and naked" was he prepared to die, so long as no innocent victims were dragged down in his ruin. In the last analysis, although the *peasant's* pride in his land undoubtedly had its weight, it was the honour of his name he sought to free from the stain of the bankrupt. Who shall blame him if he discerned in the advertisement of the wares he had to dispose of a loophole of escape? Alas! this costly passion was far from realizing the returns he expected. The agent he sent to the United States to push his enterprise returned empty-handed. Even in France subscriptions were far from compensating the considerable expenditure. In vain did the faithful Dubois knock at the doors of possible subscribers in Paris and elsewhere; it was with the greatest difficulty an occasional purse was opened, and current expenses swallowed up the sums as collected. "Il y a vraiement gagné des millions," wrote Alexandre to Dubois, in 1882, long years after the poet's death,[1] but the insatiable maw of his creditors made short work of his fabulous earnings. Not one of his numerous estates was he enabled to transmit to his descendants, excepting Saint-Point, and that was heavily encumbered at best.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 454. The final volume of the collected works was to be issued on December 31, 1863.

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[1] Alexandre, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 263. For charming recognition of Charles Alexandre's services, see *Cours de littérature*, vol. x, p. 228.

In 1860 the situation had become so desperate that friends solicited the Municipal Council of Paris to provide a suitable lodging for the aged poet in the capital he had saved from anarchy. The Emperor took kindly to the scheme, and it was due to his tactful diplomacy that the matter was at last presented in such form that the proud susceptibilities of Lamartine were soothed. After tedious negotiations, during which the venom of certain political animosities became painfully apparent,[2] a solution was reached, and the City of Paris offered M. and Madame Lamartine the chalet situated at "La Muette," near the gate of the Bois de Boulogne. This concession was revertible after the death of her uncle and aunt to Valentine de Cessiat, who had been adopted by the aged couple and authorized to bear their name.[3]

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[1] Cf. Caplain, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

[2] Cf. Chamborant, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

[3] Cf. Madame Émile Ollivier, *Valentine de Lamartine*, p. 123.

That Lamartine should have refused to be indebted for his peaceful retreat to the charity of Napoleon III is conceivable. Although he accepted the Empire and the destruction of his Republic with as good grace as he was capable of, his abhorrence of the régime, as well as of the policy it inaugurated, was intense. His disapproval of the attitude assumed towards Italy was especially vehement and outspoken. For such patriots as Garibaldi, Mazzini, Cavour, and Victor-Emmanuel, he entertained but slight admiration, styling them "héros de la démagogie militaire." In an irascible letter to Chamborant, written on June 18, 1860, he repeats almost textually the expression used to Dubois: "Je suis arrivé, pour mon compte, à l'athéisme politique le plus complet, et je vous en souhaite autant." [1] Too ill to write himself, it was to Valentine he dictated his letter; but a *post-scriptum* in his own hand adds: "Je ne vous demande pas le secret de mon athéisme politique. — Lamartine." The outburst is characteristic. He could not forgive Napoleon III, whose intervention in Italy was diametrically opposed to the diplomatic action he had advocated when in power.[2] Yet such explosions were becoming ever more rare. The political discussions in the "Cours de littérature," although frequent, show an ever-increasing tendency towards the purely academic, far removed from the earlier essays in the "Conseiller du Peuple." As age and tribulations overtake him, it is to retrospect he turns. Lovers of the literary Lamartine will find much to solace them in the pages of the "Cours," which in reality comprises twenty-eight volumes of scattered souvenirs, more or less fantastically dressed up, it is true, but pregnant with the individuality of the poet rather than that of the practical politician. The failure of the national subscription was due to the political significance lent it by Louis Bonaparte's well-meant but ill-advised support. If the sales of the monumental edition of his collected works fell short of legitimate anticipations, political considerations were again not wholly foreign to the causes which militated against success.[1] The grandeur of the hero who defended public liberties at the Hôtel de Ville was lost sight of, when not deliberately vilified, by those who complaisantly thrust their necks under the yoke of despotism. A generation was to pass before Lamartine's political action received the grateful appreciation of his countrymen.

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[1] *Lamartine inconnu*, p. 200.

[2] Cf. *Cours de littérature*, vol. XI, p. 49.

Meanwhile, the struggle for material existence became daily more painful, complicated as it was by physical and moral tortures which go far to explain the "political atheism" temporarily eclipsing his sturdy idealism. Details in letters of this period (July to December, 1860) are, indeed, harrowing. Confined to his bed for long weeks with an attack of inflammatory rheumatism, Lamartine writhes "a hundred hours at a stretch," while bailiffs lay siege to his door, and all remunerative work is at a standstill.[2] The faithful wife, herself stricken with the mortal complaint to which she was so soon to succumb, replaces him as best she can, indefatigably penning missives to business agents and friends whose aid she implores. Ready money to make the journey from Paris to Mâcon is lacking, and she knows not where to turn to procure even this modest sum. At last they are once more installed at Monceau (December), but only to be again plunged in mortal anguish. It is Lamartine himself who now holds the pen, describing to his friend, Chamborant, the horrors of the situation in which he finds himself: both Madame de Lamartine and Valentine, after weeks of sickness, are still in precarious condition; his friend, Dr. Pascal, whose devotion had saved the lives of his patients, dead at his post; a chambermaid, worn out with fatigue of nursing, also dead; another gone mad with grief over the death of her master, the doctor. "Moi, passant, sans sommeil, d'un lit à un cercueil pendant plus d'un mois." And to add to the gruesomeness, the perpetual vexatious visits of sheriffs, and the stoppage of the literary labour to which he owed his daily bread.[1] Nor were his troubles ended when finally the convalescence of his dear ones was assured. Milly, the cherished home of his childhood, was sold. From the wreck he saved only a few sticks of well-worn furniture: his mother's bed, and the cradle in which he had himself been rocked. His cup of bitterness was, indeed, full to overflowing. "Save your country from anarchy and foreign wars," he cries; "this is the reward: a hearth sold and lost forever, such is the equitable return for so many hearths saved! My soul is sick; yet I must toil on as usual, to save my poor brave creditors and their families from ruin." [2]

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[1] The Société propriétaire des Œuvres de Lamartine, to which the poet sold his copyrights, has registered, since his death, an enormous increase of sales. Between 1869 and 1895, 585,893 volumes were sold. Cf. Madame Émile Ollivier, *Valentine de Lamartine*, p. 154.

[2] Chamborant, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

In the first issue of the "Cours de littérature" (1856) Lamartine had written: "In spite of specious appearances, my life is not such as to inspire envy: I would say even more; it is finished. I no longer live, I survive. Of all the multiple men who, so to speak, lived within me, the man of sentiment, the man of poetry, the orator, the man of action, none now exist within me except the man of literature. The man of literature is not happy." [3] And he goes on to describe the galley-slave labour to which he is condemned. Alexandre opines that these pathetic pages, if they were read, "auraient dû mettre le feu à la France glacée." [1] Few will share his sentiment, however. Most sincere admirers of Lamartine must regret the undignified whining which every now and then mars the sublimity of the struggle in which he was engaged. "Happy the men who die fighting; struck down by the revolutions in which they took part!" [2] Here, at least, is a sentiment all who sorrowfully follow the decadence of this noble intellect will echo. And yet, as has been said above, some of the fairest flowers of Lamartine's gentle philosophy can be culled by the patient searcher in the pages of his declining years. The "Expiation," as it has been styled,[3] is full of lessons we could ill dispense with for a full comprehension of the brilliant man, so essentially human in his alternating strength and frailty, whose chequered career these pages have attempted to depict. M. Sugier, one of the most penetrating of his biographers, commenting on this incessant and uncongenial literary hack-work to which Lamartine was condemned, expresses the belief that had it not been for the imperative pecuniary needs which drove his pen, the world might have been the richer (after 1848) by a great metaphysical and philosophic treatise,[4] the book long years previously he had meditated writing, "en cheveux blancs." Doubt is permissible, however, as to Lamartine's technical qualification for the treatment of such a theme. Early in his parliamentary career he had written to Virieu (1836): "La métaphysique nage dans la politique, mais plus que jamais elle couve dans mon âme et elle éclora un jour." [5] In those days Dargaud had believed his friend capable of renovating catholicism, even of evolving a system of religious philosophy more in harmony with the spirit of the times. But Lamartine's limitations soon became apparent even to this enthusiastic admirer. A *thinker*, in the strictly scientific acceptance of the term, Lamartine never was, either in the field of metaphysics or in that of sociology. Instinctive rather than logical, he was incapable of harnessing his intellect to the rigidly inflexible formulæ of a system; equitable, profound, and liberal as were the ideals which seethed in his brain.[1] Free from debt he would unquestionably have continued to charm the world with masterpieces in verse or prose; but "La Chute d'un Ange" may be taken as fairly demonstrating the limitations of his metaphysics, the unscientific and purely personal character of which is even more clearly discernible in the "Voyage en Orient" and "Jocelyn." Free from debt, again, the pessimism which haunts his later compositions, and which was so foreign to his temperament, would have been spared him. To the conception of a system of philosophy he could never have aspired. A Comte, a Nietzsche, or even a William James, forms the antithesis of a Lamartine. The religious philosophy he *might* have elaborated in his old age could only have been one of pure sentiment, following Biblical lines, interspersed with Arianism, and deeply tinged with the pantheism from which his soul was never completely liberated.

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[1] Chamborant, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 212; cf. also Legouvé (*Soixante ans de souvenirs*), who cites (vol. IV, p. 189) a pathetic letter from Lamartine on the sale of Milly.

[3] *Cours de littérature*, vol. I, p. 69.

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[1] *Madame de Lamartine*, p. 197.

[2] *Cours de littérature*, vol. I, p. 74.

[3] Sugier, *Lamartine, étude morale*, p. 328.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 341.

[5] *Correspondance*, DCXXV.

It has been frequently asserted that, near the close of his life, Lamartine turned again to Catholicism. M. Sugier does not believe this to be the fact,[2] and most unbiassed students will agree with him, in spite of his increasing predilection for the "Imitation of Christ." [3]

[1] Cf. Whitehouse, "De la Religiosité de Lamartine," *Bibliothèque Universelle*, Octobre, 1913.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 351.

[3] Cf. Barrès, *op. cit.*, p. 90. In his *Lamartine et ses amis* (p. 268) Lacretelle dwells upon this "faith of the deist, superior to all dogma."

A nominal Catholic he had always been, and remained to the end; but he had detached himself from the traditional dogma of the Church. It was the "historical Jesus" he accepted, not the second Member of the Trinity.[1] Charles Alexandre, in his "Madame de Lamartine," cites conclusive evidence of the unorthodoxy of the husband's creed, which the wife would "give her blood" to redeem. Yet she acknowledges, with a sigh of relief, the constant presence of God before his eyes, his faith in immortality and in celestial justice, and above all his abounding and never-failing charity. "His place will not be the last," the pious woman exclaims, deeply as she regrets his inability to accept blindly the tenets of the Church she had herself unconditionally embraced on her marriage.[2]

"*Plus il fait jour, mieux on voit Dieu !*" wrote the bard.[3] The essence of his religious philosophy is summed up in that single line.

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[1] Cf. *Cours de littérature*, vol. x, p. 202 (1860), a conversation between Lamartine, Laprade, and Liszt, at Saint-Point; also Sugier, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

[2] Alexandre, *op. cit.*, p. 239. Eugène Pelletan, a personal friend, relates an episode when, her husband being seriously ill, Madame de Lamartine sought to gain admittance to his bedside for the Bishop of Troyes. Lamartine sat bolt upright on his couch, exclaiming with severity: "Tell him that I am too ill to receive any others than my friends"; cited by E. Sugier, *op. cit.*, p. 253. "Il entendait mourir comme il pensait, et depuis longtemps il pensait en philosophe," adds M. Sugier.

[3] *Cours de littérature*, vol. x, p. 199.

CHAPTER LV

DECLINING YEARS

Despite impending ruin and the fatigue occasioned by incessant literary toil, despite increasing infirmities and frequent illness, the hospitality accorded relations, friends, or strangers at Saint-Point, or in the modest cottage in Paris, was inexhaustible.

Many characteristic details can be gleaned from the souvenirs of those who visited the aged poet during the last decade of his life; details which throw side-lights, sometimes bright, more often sombre, alas! upon the great man's psychological peculiarities during the last phase of his career.

Among these friends of the eleventh hour few approached Lamartine more closely, or with more reverential sympathy, than the poet Édouard Grenier. Of him Jules Lemaître said that, "en résumé" he was "quelque chose comme un Lamartine sobre, un Musset décent, un Vigny optimiste."[1] Grenier had first known Lamartine during the strenuous months of the Provisional Government, when, not yet twenty, he had interrupted his studies in Germany and Austria to hurry back to France. Through the medium of Baron d'Eckstein he had been introduced to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who offered him a diplomatic appointment. Pending his departure, Grenier was a constant visitor at the Hôtel de Ville, and an eye-witness of his chief's daily, nay hourly, oratorical contests with the mob which perpetually surged in the square before the building. The magic of the poet's eloquence, the authority he exercised over colleagues and mob alike, filled the young diplomatist with admiration.

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[1] *Les Contemporains*, vol. I, p. 126.

Long years passed before Grenier was again brought into intimate contact with the hero of 1848. Old age and afflictions had bowed the commanding figure, but adversity had not conquered the calm assurance which had contributed to the triumphs of earlier years. In the gloomy, incommodious apartment of the rue Ville-l'Évêque, M. Grenier found a hearty welcome. Every evening, until ten o'clock, a few friends, strangers of distinction, and the members of his family, gathered about the poet and paid him homage. Afoot and at work at all seasons from five in the morning, Lamartine toiled at his desk until noon. The afternoon was given to his business affairs, a short walk, and to reading. Questioned as to whether this early rising had not become second nature to him, Lamartine replied: "Never. It is as hard for me to-day as it was the first day." [1] During these evening receptions Madame de Lamartine sat apart, taking little interest in the conversation, but showing clearly, by her constant watchfulness, her worshipful devotion to the man whose name she bore. "She had suffered with him, perhaps through him," writes Grenier. "If she could not approve all, she never blamed him. There was something maternal in her sorrowful and magnanimous indulgence." [2] Flanked on either side by his inseparable greyhounds, Lamartine reclined on a divan, or restlessly paced the narrow salon, carefully avoiding the little chandelier which hung from the low ceiling, his hands deep in the pockets of his wide trousers. At times he would talk incessantly; at others, ab-

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[1] Cf. Grenier, *Souvenirs littéraires*, p. 20.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 21. Lacretelle, in his *Lamartine et ses amis*, p. 283, also asserts that, although Madame de Lamartine was invariably present during her husband's receptions, she held herself aloof. But her correspondence with friends was actively carried on to the end.

LAMARTINE

From a photograph by Alexandre Martin, Paris

sorbed in thought, he hardly seemed aware of the presence of his guests. M. Grenier touches upon the master's prodigious instinctive faculty of assimilating a subject in which he was interested and of extracting the essentials, without preliminary study. The shallowness one might have expected from this dangerous facility was rarely apparent, and these intuitive judgments or appreciations were in nine cases out of ten logically sound. Yet he possessed no true sense of criticism, for the simple reason that his imagination interposed itself between his view of a subject and the realities, colouring everything with the hues he *wished* to see. There is a depth of truth in Chateaubriand's exclamation on reading the "History of the Girondins," "Le Malheureux! Il a doré la guillotine!"

The philosopher, Pierre Joseph Proudhon, after enumerating Lamartine's unquestionable intellectual gifts, gauges him as follows: "Unfortunately, these beautiful qualities are overshadowed, often even neutralized, by an irremediable blemish. Intellectual labour, that analytical and synthetic spirit which alone, in giving the reason of things, elevates and maintains the ideal, is, in M. de Lamartine's case, totally lacking. He contemplates, he does not penetrate: and as with all contemplative natures, one may say that with him Reason surpasses the feminine attribute just sufficiently to save him from being a woman." [1]

If in his elegiac verse this femineity constituted undeniable charm, the same cannot be said where philosophical epics are concerned, or when he attempted controversial historical subjects.

To quote again from Grenier's souvenirs, Lamartine prided himself, sometimes to the extent of being ludicrous, on the power he possessed, or thought he possessed, of mastering technical subjects without effort. "Je n'ai jamais étudié que deux choses, l'économie politique et les finances!" he once assured his astonished listener, who could not conceal a smile.[1] The unintentional humour of the remark must appear as positively pathetic to the student of Lamartine's administration of public and private finance. George Ticknor, who often saw the Lamartines in Paris at a much earlier date (1837), makes a remark in his diary which shows that neither the poet nor his wife had greatly modified their idiosyncrasies during the twenty-odd years which intervened between his visits and those of M. Grenier. Writing of his host Mr. Ticknor says: "He is, I should imagine, nervous and sensitive; and walks up and down in the back part of his saloon, talking with only one, or at most two persons, who walk with him. This, I am told, is his habit, and that it is not agreeable to him to talk when sitting." Mr. Ticknor was greatly struck by Lamartine's "poetical faith that the recent improvements in material life, like steam and railroads, have their poetical side, and will be used for poetical purposes with success." Of Madame de Lamartine Ticknor's impressions coincide with those of Grenier a quarter of a century later. The American notes that "she was dressed in black, a colour she has constantly worn since the death of their only child, a daughter of fourteen, who died on their journey in the East. She avoids the world and general society, and receives only gentlemen who visit her husband. She talked well with me about the Abbé de Lamennais and his 'Livre du Peuple,' and showed herself to be, what I believe she really is, a lady of much intellectual accomplishment." [2]

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[1] Cf. *De la justice dans la révolution et dans l'église,* 11th study, chapter II. "Il avait des attentions de femme," asserts Alexandre (*op. cit.*, p. 288), when relating an episode demonstrating the poet's solicitude for the material comfort of those around him.

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[1] Grenier, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

[2] *Life, Letters, and Journals of George Ticknor*, vol. II, p. 117 (Edition of 1909). Ticknor also frequented the salon of Madame de Circourt, as well as that of Mrs. Lee-Childe in the same quarter of the town. (Cf. Huber-

Lamartine's faith in the poetical side of modern mechanical inventions was indeed sincere. "La Chute d'un Ange" did not appear until the year following Mr. Ticknor's visit. Even had he read the poem, Lamartine's description of an aeroplane could only have seemed to him a fantastic flight of the imagination. But twentieth-century readers of the episode cannot fail to be struck by the "vision" of the modern flying-machine so disconcertingly evoked. In the "Eighth Vision" of the poem the author finds it necessary to transport his hero, Cédar, rapidly to a great distance. Discarding the supernatural, or the wings of Icarus, as hackneyed and out of date, Lamartine sets himself to invent a mechanical device which shall satisfy the scientific and technical requirements of the age in which he lives. The result is the following ingenious disclosure of prehistoric lore: —

"C'est cet art disparu que Babel vit éclore,
Et qu'après dix mille ans le monde cherche encore!
Pour défier les airs et pour s'y hasarder,
Les hommes n'avaient eu dès lors qu'à regarder.
Des ailes d'oiseau le simple phénomène
Avait servi d'exemple à la science humaine."

And plunging boldly into the maze of technical description concerning his apparatus, the undaunted inventor continues: —

"Du vaisseau dans les airs il élevait le poids,
Comme sur l'océan se soulève le bois,
Les hommes, mesurant le moteur à la masse,
S'élevaient, s'abaissaient à leur gré dans l'espace,
Dépassant la nuée ou rasant les hauteurs,
Et, pour frayer le ciel à ses navigateurs,

Saladin, *Le Comte de Circourt,* p. 118.) Count Nigra, in his unpublished letters of Count Cavour and Madame de Circourt, gives charming glimpses of this extraordinarily intellectual couple. As has been said, Cavour shared none of his friend's enthusiasm for Lamartine. (Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 62.) The aversion was mutual: Lamartine also mistrusted the great Italian statesman's policy, although according ample justice to his talents.

Pour garder de l'écueil la barque qui chavire,
Un pilote imprimait sa pensée au navire.
D'un second appareil l'habile impulsion
Donnait au char volant but et direction."

The motor, it is true, was driven neither by steam nor by gasoline, the airship being propelled by means of bellows which inflated a species of sail: —

"Sur le bec de la proue un grand soufflet mouvant,
Comme un poumon qui s'enfle en aspirant le vent,
Engouffrait dans ses flancs un courant d'air avide,
Et, gonflant sur la poupe un autre soufflet vide,
Lui fournissait sans cesse, afin de l'exhaler,
L'air dont, par contre-coup, la voile allait s'enfler.
Ainsi, par la vertu d'un mystère suprême,
Un élément servait à se vaincre lui-même!
Et le pilote assis, la main sur le timon,
Voguait au souffle égal de son double poumon." [1]

It is doubtful whether a working model of his invention would have convinced scientific experts; but the illusion produced is amply adequate for the poetical object Lamartine had in view, and sufficiently plausible to impress the non-critical reader as to his technical knowledge of mechanics.

The charm of the unconventional hospitality offered a stranger at Saint-Point is expressed with unaffected simplicity in a little pamphlet entitled "Un Déjeuner chez Lamartine en 1859." [2] Then a young man of twenty, M. Montarlot, on a literary pilgrimage to Milly, learned that the old poet was himself visiting the home of his childhood and would gladly receive him. In spite of his approaching seventieth birthday, Lamartine appeared to his visitor youthful in figure, and preserving the rare distinction and graceful poise of head which the portraits of his early manhood had made familiar. An invitation to lunch at Saint-Point followed, eagerly accepted by the younger man. A casual remark made by Lamartine on a subsequent visit denotes the esteem in which he was held by members of the Government of the Empire. It would seem that a plan for the transformation of the rue de la Ville-l'Évêque called for the demolition of his abode. M. de Persigny, the Minister of the Interior, on learning that the proposed alterations would result in Lamartine's eviction, refused to sanction the measure. M. Montarlot notes that in those days Lamartine had practically become a vegetarian, a fact which is vouched for by many memoirists of the period.

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[1] *La Chute d'un Ange*, p. 270.

[2] Printed for private circulation. M. Montarlot supplemented his pamphlet with several personal letters to the author, from which the above details are drawn.

Dr. Prosper Ménière has left a very realistic account of a visit paid to Monceau a few years earlier (July 16, 1854).[1] Accompanied by Jules Janin, the famous literary critic and author, the Doctor was unceremoniously received in the poet's bedroom, where he found him suffering from a severe attack of gout. Of an observant turn of mind, Dr. Ménière had been struck, in passing through a dressing-room, by the formidable array of boots and shoes which met his gaze. Over one hundred pairs, he asserts, were symmetrically lined up on a long deal table. Every detail, even the most minute, is, so to say, photographed in the pages of this "Journal," and the description of Lamartine reclining on a broad, low bed, shared with three or four dogs, his face smeared with snuff, his untidy surroundings and far from scrupulously clean attire, all go to make up a picture quite out of harmony with preconceived ideals of the poet's fastidious elegance. Speaking of his work, Lamartine informed his guests that he was at present occupied with his "History of Turkey," for which he had received in advance one hundred and fifty thousand francs, for six volumes. "I shall write one volume a month," he confidently assured his hearers.[1] "Ce sont *les mille et une nuits* de l'histoire," he remarked; adding that the East was the real country, the best adapted to his physical and moral nature, and that eventually he would return there to die.

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[1] *Journal du Docteur Prosper Ménière*, p. 71.

But, although many came to pay their tribute of homage at the shrine of the dethroned deity, there were others who did not hesitate, while professing friendship, to wound his susceptibilities. Examples of Lamartine's sarcasm are so rare that the following verses are of special interest. Gustave Nadaud, a writer of popular songs who enjoyed a certain celebrity during the fifties, had a dinner engagement of some days' standing with the aged poet. At the last moment an invitation reached him to dine with the Princess Mathilde, cousin of the Emperor Napoleon III. Nadaud unhesitatingly threw over the fallen idol of 1848, and hied him to the sumptuous board of the relative of the reigning Cæsar. Whereupon the gentle bard addressed to him these satirical lines, imitating the chansonnier's style: —

"Un jour, le vaincu de Pharsale
M'offrit un diner d'un écu.
Le vin est bleu, la nappe est sale,
On ne va pas chez un vaincu.
Mais quand la cousine d'Auguste
Me fait prier en sa maison,
J'accours, j'arrive à l'heure juste . . .
Chansonnier, vous avez raison!"[2]

This paraphrase of Nadaud's popular song, "Les Deux Gendarmes," each verse of which terminates with the refrain, "Brigadier, vous avez raison," shows a trait so foreign to Lamartine's character, devoid of guile or malice, that one accepts its authenticity with considerable scepticism, in spite of the unimpeachable source from which it is taken.

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[1] *Journal du Docteur Prosper Ménière*, p. 80.

[2] Cited by Madame Ollivier in her *Valentine de Lamartine*, p. 113.

"En fait de haine, je veux mourir insolvable," said Lamartine one day to Émile Ollivier, Napoleon III's last Minister, and Lamartine's successor in the French Academy.[1] To which may be added Lacretelle's epigram: "He has been reproached for not knowing how to hate." [2] Some have regarded this inability to hate, or even to blame, as a defect in his character; a culpable weakness. Perhaps it was. Lamartine was prone to excessive, often fulsome, flattery, especially when the work of younger men was submitted to his criticism. He had an instinctive dread of giving pain: another instance of the femineity of his temperament, but a lovable one, it must be confessed.[3]

"J'aime à aimer!" Alexandre reports Lamartine as saying; and this biographer adds that he might with equal truth have said: "J'aime à admirer." [4] He himself accepted criticism with complacency, allowing his wife and secretaries to amend or alter his verses or prose without undue expostulation. The puritanism of Madame de Lamartine often discerned heresies, nay even indecencies, which she undertook to mitigate or suppress: notably was this the case with certain "visions" in the "Chute d'un Ange." Even the pure and exquisite verses of "Le Lac" did not escape her condemnation, and in a revised edition she transmogrified the final line: —

"Tout dise: ils ont aimé !"

into

"Tout dise: ils ont passé!"

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[1] Émile Ollivier, *Lamartine*, p. 168. [2] Cf. Lacretelle, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

[3] Alexandre, in his *Madame de Lamartine* (p. 275), contends that the old poet took real and unfeigned pleasure in listening to the verses of the younger generation. Cf. also Ticknor (*op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 117), who characterizes Lamartine's praise as "more kind than is even discreet or useful."

[4] *Souvenirs*, p. 382.

Lamartine, writes Madame Ollivier, when these mutilations were brought to his notice, patiently submitted. "C'était superbe hier au soir," he complained to Dargaud when sending him one of his articles, "je le gâte ce matin pour obéir à ma femme." [1]

If there were moments when Lamartine gently resented these incursions into a realm so essentially his own, his easy-going nature, combined with the "fatal facility" of productiveness, rendered him more often indifferent. Ernest Legouvé cites an instance of this phenomenally effortless improvisation, which was, so to speak, subconscious, a mere conversational spark often provoking the flood of latent harmonies buried in his soul. One day his sister, Madame de Pierreclos, asked him casually to write a few verses in the album a young girl had sent, requesting an autograph. Lamartine took up his pen, and without an instant's hesitation or reflection, wrote the following beautiful lines: —

> "Le livre de la vie est le livre suprême
> Qu'on ne peut ni fermer, ni rouvrir à son choix;
> Le passage attachant ne s'y lit pas deux fois;
> Mais le feuillet fatal se tourne de lui-même;
> On voudrait revenir à la page où l'on aime,
> Et la page où l'on meurt est déjà sous nos doigts."

Nonchalantly he handed the album to his sister, without re-reading what he had transcribed, as if in a trance. Amazed at the exquisite pathos of the verses as well as by the prodigious facility with which they had been produced, Madame de Pierreclos could only gasp: "Mon Dieu, pardonnez-lui, il ne sait pas ce qu'il fait!" [2] "I never think," once remarked Lamartine; "my ideas think for me." An exaggeration, in a sense, for he had been a voracious, omnivorous reader in his youth, if not a student, and the recesses of his memory were stored with inexhaustible treasure. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the flashes disclosed in the serried pages of the "Cours de littérature"; a monument of scattered recollections and fragmentary philosophic thought, bearing the imprint of accretive learning. Perhaps he meant to imply that he did not *delve* for his thoughts: that they were the spontaneous gushing of the pure waters of his genius. If this be the case, most critics will readily agree with him, for of effort there is no trace in any of his writings. The sacrilegious tamperings of his wife were after all unimportant, and posthumous editions have reverted to the poet's original phraseology.[1] The letters published by her friend and close confidant, Charles Alexandre, make clear the sincerity and honesty of her purpose when taking liberties with her husband's, it must be confessed, carelessly constructed text. It was a labour of love by a woman more jealous of the author's literary reputation than he was himself. On her practically fell the burden of revision for the great edition of Lamartine's collected works. "I can't tell you," she wrote Alexandre, "all that I accomplish materially in my day, and how overcome by fatigue I am when night comes! The publisher is here. I have handed over three volumes this morning, to feed the steam engines." [2]

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[1] *Valentine de Lamartine*, p. 22; cf. also Lacretelle, *op. cit.*, p. 228. "Que voulez-vous," Lamartine sadly confessed to this author: "mes dettes m'ont fait faire bien des lâchetés." A curious letter from Madame de Lamartine to Alexandre contains a complaint that her husband consulted her rarely as to his literary compositions. Cf. *Madame de Lamartine*, p. 311.

[2] *Soixante ans de souvenirs*, vol. IV, p. 232.

Her activity was, however, approaching its term. The noble, if somewhat narrow-minded, woman who for over forty years had sacrificed self wholly and unconditionally to the fame and happiness of the man she loved, whose vigilance was as incessant as it was discreet, broke down gradually under the prolonged strain caused by the financial worries which beset her husband after 1850. Never robust, her health had for some years past given anxiety to her friends. But, hiding her ailments from her husband, she toiled indefatigably as his copyist until early in May, 1863, when, exhausted in mind and body, she was attacked by the malady which was to prove fatal. Lamartine and his niece, Valentine de Cessiat,[1] were both seriously ill, and the physical effort of nursing her dear ones had sapped her failing strength. The circumstances attending her death, on May 21, 1863, were peculiarly dramatic. Separated from his wife by the breadth of a narrow passage only, the husband was yet unable to leave his bed and assist her during her last moments.[2] Unaccompanied by any member of the immediate family, the body was taken to Mâcon, and thence conveyed to Saint-Point, where it rests in the little mortuary chapel Lamartine had built in the wall separating his park from the village church.[3]

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[1] Cf. Gustave Lanson's erudite volumes on the *Méditations poétiques*, Introduction, and *passim*, as well as Léon Séché's studies.

[2] *Madame de Lamartine*, p. 314.

Lamartine's devotion to his wife had been wholehearted, although passion he had never pretended. Temperamentally dissimilar as the couple was, this union of the Latin and the Anglo-Saxon characteristics, of which each was typically representative, had nevertheless been an unusually cloudless one. In a measure the two natures completed each other. The exuberance, the spontaneity, of the man was tempered by the calm and dignified reserve, one might almost say, British phlegm, of his wife, to whom the licence of Gallic conversational and social intercourse savoured of immorality. A year or more older than her husband, Madame de Lamartine, especially during the later period of her life, had *mothered* the man she so faithfully served. Nor was Lamartine ungrateful. His appreciation of the virtues of the woman whose private fortune he had compromised with his own, was genuine. When ruin stared him in the face, he wrote Chamborant: "Mon humiliation dépasse celle de Job, mais j'ai de *bonnes femmes* et de bons amis." This was in 1861, when Valentine had taken her place in the old poet's household, ministering to uncle and aunt with an abnegation which was the solace of their declining years.[1] The loss of his wife was a blow from which Lamartine never recovered, in spite of the atmosphere of love and devotion surrounding him and of the adoring worship lavished by the tireless Valentine, his constant and inseparable companion during the six years of life still remaining to him. "Sans Valentine, qui me désattriste tout, ma situation serait presque insoutenable," he assured Chamborant.[2] The closeness of the tie which bound the uncle and the niece is proclaimed in a letter written six weeks after the poet's death, in which the lonely orphan cries: "Je ne peux pas m'habituer à vivre sans lui; chaque minute est un supplice." [3]

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[1] His adopted daughter since 1854.

[2] Cf. Alexandre, *op. cit.*, p. 376; and Chamborant, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

[3] Lady Margaret Domville, in her *Lamartine*, p. 394, asserts that the Government offered a public funeral, which was declined. Documentary evidence of this assertion is, however, lacking, and she probably confounds the offer with that made at Lamartine's death.

One by one the associates of his life were passing away. In December, 1865, Dargaud died. None had been more intimately connected with Lamartine during the last thirty-five years; few had exerted a greater influence over his political and metaphysical doubts and aspirations. Lamartine's lifelong ambition had been, it will be remembered, the close union of politics and religion, in a somewhat primitive and Biblical sense, it is true. The separation of Church and State which he so persistently advocated in no wise entailed in his estimation a lowering of either the spirit or the form of the Christianity he maintained as essential to free government.[1] It was the severance of what he considered the purely material ties of the Concordat that he desired; believing that the "religion of conscience" would gain by liberty of conscience, which is "a progress of human thought toward the idea of God." [2] In this Dargaud, himself a free-thinker in practice, but a metaphysician at heart, encouraged him. Both Alexandre and Jean des Cognets assert that Lamartine expressed regret that no religious ceremony was performed at his friend's funeral.[3] In his "Hymn au Christ" the poet had written: —

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[1] Chamborant, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

[2] August 12, 1863.

[3] Chamborant, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

> "O, Dieu de mon berceau, sois le Dieu de ma tombe";

and with advancing years this sentiment had become ever stronger. A liberal in religion as he was a liberal in politics, Lamartine was sincerely respectful of the forms of the creed he sought to spiritualize and free from the materialism which overlaid it. That his friend should have elected to dispense with the last rites of the religion they both outwardly professed, while maintaining certain reserves as to dogma, could not fail to shock and pain him.

In the third essay of his "Cours de littérature," dealing with the philosophy and literature of primitive India, Lamartine calls man "*the Priest of Creation*," whose functions are "*to believe, to adore, and to pray*." [4] "All other functions are secondary," he adds. Such an assertion leaves little room for doubt as to the religiosity of the man who penned it.

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[1] Cf. his *Atheism among the People*, already cited.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 47.

[3] *Lamartine et ses amis*, p. 383; and *La vie intérieure de Lamartine*, p. 32.

[4] *Op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 162.

CHAPTER LVI

POLITICAL VIEWS

THAT Lamartine's political sagacity was not infallible is proved by the attitude he assumed towards the problems of Italian unity and Napoleon III's policy in Mexico. His practically unconditional moral support of the latter is, indeed, astonishing when we recall to mind not only his personal antipathies to the Empire founded on the *coup d'état*, but the generous and communicative enthusiasm with which he pleaded the cause of the United States during the controversy concerning the indemnity claimed for losses in the Napoleonic wars.[1]

The first intimation we have of this change of heart is in a paragraph in a letter to Baron de Chamborant, dated August 12, 1863. Therein Lamartine unhesitatingly endorses the adventurous Mexican expedition which was undertaken to place Maximilian upon a transatlantic throne. He is delighted at the blow aimed at the pride of the United States, and exults at the prospect of "*le milliard de revenus que nous découvrirons avant peu dans les mines de la Sonora.*" [2]

Two years later (1865) he gives vent to an explosion of animosity which is literally dumbfounding. The opportunity is afforded him in an essay on American literature, in the seventeenth "Entretien" of his "Cours de littérature." [3] This essay is entitled "Une page unique d'histoire naturelle, par Audubon." Therein Lamartine gives utterance to many extraordinary statements and expressions of opinion, the consensus of which is violently hostile to the United States. In spite of the noble cause the North was at that moment defending (a cause Lamartine had himself espoused at an earlier date), he can discern only evil motives on the part of Lincoln, and selfish aims masquerading under the guise of philanthropic charlatanism. Jealousy over the commercial riches of the South is at the root of Northern intervention for the abolition of slavery.[1] Nor can he forgive Americans either the Louisiana Purchase or the Mexican War of 1846. In his anger Lamartine repudiates the very principles he defended in 1835 when speaking in Parliament on the American claims: "Combien ne m'en suis-je pas repenti depuis cette époque!" he exclaims. "We ought to have fired paper bullets against their phantom fleet; but at that time they relied in their insolence on the alliance with England, with which country we desired to remain at peace." [2] There are many pages of harsh invective and fantastic accusations of piracy, showing a bitterness wholly inconceivable unless we accept the hypothesis of a personal grievance. Such a supposition is admissible, alas! in view of the dismal failure of his envoy to the United States for the sale of his collected works, on which venture he had founded exaggerated expectations. "Seul peut-être des hommes indépendants de l'époque, Lamartine n'a pas maudit l'expédition du Mexique," writes Chamborant, in commenting on the letter quoted above.[3] Not only did Lamartine refuse to "curse" the policy referred to, but a couple of years later (1865) he lauded it unconditionally in the essay under our consideration. ". . . La pensée de la position à prendre par nous au Mexique," he writes, "est une pensée grandiose, une pensée incomprise (je dirai tout à l'heure pourquoi), une pensée juste comme la nécessité, vaste comme l'Océan, neuve comme l'à-propos, une pensée d'homme d'État, féconde comme l'avenir, une pensée de salut pour l'Amérique et pour le monde. . . . La pensée d'une position hardie et efficace à prendre au Mexique contre l'usurpation des États Unis d'Amérique est une pensée neuve, mais juste. L'Europe en a le droit, la France en prend l'initiative." [1]

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[1] Cf. *La France parlementaire*, vol. I, p. 126.

[2] *Lamartine inconnu*, p. 245.

[3] vol. XX, p. 81.

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[1] vol. xx, p. 91.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[3] *Lamartine inconnu*, p. 246. Lamartine himself wrote, in 1865, that *he alone* in France realized the "general utility" of the expedition. Cf. *Cours de littérature*, vol. xx, p. 105.

It is difficult to follow, impossible to approve, the vagaries of Lamartine's arguments as to the *right* of Europe, especially of France, to save Latin America from the "greedy" encroachments of the United States. They differ only in degree from those advanced by the Germany of our day concerning the universal hegemony of the Teuton. Undoubtedly the blockade established during the War of Secession, and the consequent scarcity of cotton in the markets of Europe, dictated his point of view.[2] "*Le globe est la propriété de l'homme; le nouveau continent, l'Amérique, est la propriété de l'Europe.*" This sentiment, printed in capitals, forcibly recalls the pretentious arrogance of the Pan-Germanists.[3]

His conception of the Monroe Doctrine is equally extraordinary. "Such is this people to whom M. Monroe, one of their flatterers, said in order to win their applause: *The time has come when you should no longer tolerate that Europe meddle in the affairs of America, but that, in future, you should assert your preponderance in the affairs of Europe!*" [4]

In vain does M. de Chamborant attempt a justification of these astounding precepts.[5] That Lamartine should, with M. Rouher, proclaim the Mexican Expedition "la grande pensée du règne" is so essentially in contradiction with the political tenets of his career, that only a senile irritation against a nation which had failed to respond adequately, when offered an opportunity of purchasing the works of a justly celebrated author, can be advanced in exculpation. Wounded pride is perhaps more accountable for the expression of Lamartine's aberration than appears upon the surface, for it is impossible to take seriously his fears concerning political ambitions of the United States in Europe, although his prognostications of threatening economic supremacy were well founded.[1]

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[1] *Cours de littérature*, vol. XX, p. 98.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 99.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

[5] *Lamartine inconnu*, p. 247.

Lamartine's theories concerning the dangers to which France might be exposed with the consummation of Italian political unity were founded, as subsequent events have proved, on more substantial grounds. Although his opinions underwent considerable transformation during the years following 1848, he may be said to have been consistently and systematically opposed to the political unity of the Peninsula. With remarkable foresight he discerned the possibility of an alliance between Italy and Austria, and realized how detrimental such a pact must be to France. When in power he grudgingly admitted a strong kingdom in Northern Italy, extending from Turin to Venice; was even prepared to countenance the formation of a confederacy of sovereign Italian States, wholly independent from Austrian influences. But further than this he was not inclined to go. For this concession he esteemed that France should seek territorial compensation in Nice and Savoy, as was the case when, ten years later, Napoleon III, at the instigation of Cavour, lent his aid to Piedmont.[2] Lamartine was, however (in view of the extremely delicate position occupied by the Provisional Government, and by the maxims expressed in his "Manifesto to Europe"), particularly anxious to avoid any semblance of interference with

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[1] *Cours de littérature*, vol. xx, p. 103.

[2] Cf. Quentin-Bauchart, *Lamartine* (La politique étrangère), p. 234.

Italian affairs. Unsolicited intervention he would not tolerate. Much as he desired what might be termed a legitimate pretext for the return of Savoy within the national fold, he realized that his Declaration of Principles demanded that the initiative, the cry for help, must come from Charles Albert. Failing this, however, Milan or Venice, should they make a direct appeal to France, might be given a sympathetic hearing.

The diplomatic correspondence of this period contains many semi-official letters from Italian politicians touching upon this important problem; some openly seeking French intervention. The arrival of Mazzini in Paris practically put a stop, however, to these intrigues. As M. Quentin-Bauchart correctly sums up the incident, Mazzini was a patriot above all else, and even his republicanism was subjected to his passionate longing to free his country from the Austrian yoke. This task he believed Charles Albert able to accomplish without foreign intervention, although convinced that, should the necessity occur, French aid could be had for the asking.[1] Manin, in Venice, cut off from the rest of Italy, although he may have shared Mazzini's apprehensions as to the price Italy would be made to pay for French intervention, was, by force of circumstances, more ready to run the risks. M. Quentin-Bauchart cites a fragment of a letter from the great Venetian tribune in which, thanking France for her sympathy, he writes as follows: "Elle nous promet un appui qui donne beaucoup à espérer, rien à craindre; les secours venant d'un pays dont Lamartine est ministre ne sauraient être dangereux."[2] Perhaps Manin was not quite sincere when professing to ignore the dangers to which French intervention might give rise. But his situation was a desperate one, and he could ill afford to discard the proverbial straw. M. Quentin-Bauchart affirms that the reunion of Savoy and Nice to France "restait donc le but poursuivi par Lamartine avec ténacité et il était décidé à l'atteindre quelle que fût l'issue de la guerre." [1]

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[1] Cf. Mazzini, *République et royauté en Italie*, p. 112.

[2] Cf. *Documents et pièces authentiques laissés par David Manin*, p. 174.

In his "Lettre aux Dix Départements," after he had resigned office, Lamartine specifically states that if the struggle for Italian independence had proved a protracted one, and Charles Albert had made an appeal to France, he was prepared to go to his aid; adding that even had the King of Sardinia not called for his help, had he been worsted, French troops would have interceded, "non comme conquérants, non comme agitateurs, mais comme médiateurs armés et désintéressés." [2] And this programme he asserts would have been carried out, had he remained in power, *even after the revolt of June.*[3]

Doubtless Piedmont must then have paid the price demanded ten years later; but Lamartine should not have countenanced any intrigue which sacrificed the interests of sovereign Italian States to the ambitions of the border Kingdom. He was, as has been said, always opposed to a United Italy. Writing Alexandre in 1861, Madame de Lamartine says: "Hélas! M. de Lamartine a eu trop raison contre l'unité. . . . Ricasoli sera plus dur encore que Cavour." And she relates a conversation between her husband and three French diplomatists who shared his views. "Ils trouvent l'unité aussi impossible qu'inique de la part de l'ambition du Piémont, qui opprime en conquérant avec un hypocrite prétexte d'affranchir." [1]

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[1] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.*, p. 348; cf. also letter of June 3, 1848, from the Sardinian Minister in Paris, the Marquis Brignole, to Pareto, Charles Albert's Minister for Foreign Affairs.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

[3] *Cours de littérature*, vol. II, p. 46; cf. also *Ibid.*, vol. IX, p. 408, wherein Lamartine states that he would never have allowed Austria to crush Piedmont. "Nous vous laisserons petite puissance gardienne des Alpes; ce ne sera qu'une question de frontière pour nous." "'*Les États-Unis italiens*,' voilà le mot de la situation, voilà la politique de la France," he wrote in 1861 (*Cours de littérature*, vol. XI, p. 79). It was the only form of political unity Lamartine could admit for Italy with safety for France, for the possible alliance with Austria haunted him. In his *History of the Revolution of 1848*, Garnier-Pagès says that Lamartine frequently offered his aid to Piedmont. He (Lamartine) wished to invade Italy, even against the wishes of Charles Albert, in order to prevent action by demagogues in France. Cf. *op. cit.*, vol. VI, p. 392.

Commenting in 1856 on the glorious impulse which inspired the Italian patriots to rise against their Austrian oppressors, Lamartine expresses the prophetic conviction that, in spite of their unquestioned valour, the Italians had need of the military prestige of France in order to achieve their liberation. "Ma pensée de prudence et de temporisation pour eux était plus italienne que celle de Charles Albert," he somewhat fatuously adds.[2] Again and again in the volumes of his "Cours de littérature," he returns to the subject, explaining his action in 1848, and criticizing subsequent negotiations. For the Congress of Paris in 1856, and Cavour's diplomatic victories, his condemnation is most severe.[3] He discerns in the concessions made the decline of French prestige, and foreshadows the German unity, which must aim a death-blow at European political independence. The value to France of an alliance with Italy did not escape him. "En s'alliant à l'Autriche, le roi d'Italie amène à son gré un million de soldats sur nos Alpes," he writes. "En s'alliant avec nous, le roi d'Italie amène à son heure un million d'hommes sur le Tyrol et sur l'Allemagne du Midi." [4] Hardly less does he dread the predominance of British influence in the Peninsula, which, under given circumstances, may be fatal to French interests.[5] Needless to say, Garibaldi's expedition to Sicily and the Piedmontese invasion of Naples fill him with concern, for he sees therein the complicity of England.[1] Seeking alliances for France (in 1861) he pronounces "L'alliance russe prématurée de plusieurs siècles pour la France," on account of the conflict of interests in the East; and discarding other political combinations, he decides in favour of a pact with Austria.[2] Five years before Sadowa he cries: "La France seule empêche la Prusse de conspirer l'unité allemande par l'anéantissement de l'Autriche."[3] "Ma politique, en apparence téméraire en Italie, était une extrême prudence," wrote Lamartine to Circourt while the latter was still in Berlin, towards the end of July, 1848.[4]

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[1] Alexandre, *Madame de Lamartine*, p. 288. The identity of these three diplomatists is not revealed.

[2] *Cours de littérature*, vol. II, p. 38.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. IX, p. 337.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. XI, p. 48.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

Be this as it may, and always excepting the very definite ambition concerning Savoy, his general policy in Italy certainly presented no particularly salient or statesmanlike characteristics. As M. Quentin-Bauchart correctly observes: "Lamartine ne semble point avoir eu sur la constitution de la péninsule italienne, après la crise actuelle, des idées bien arrêtées."[5] If at a much later day he specified certain subjective contingencies which influenced his action, as recorded above, they were probably the fruit of mature reflection during intervening years. As such they have an undoubted value as demonstrative of the evolution of his political and diplomatic genius, and, within certain bounds, of his prophetic vision. Historically, however, their import is slight, as few public men have given evidence in their reminiscences of a greater tendency towards inaccuracy than Lamartine. His poetic temperament clothed, as has been said, scenes and actions with colours often far removed from reality. Without the intention to mislead, Lamartine is all too frequently misleading. Unless we have chapter and verse in support of certain allegations, it behooves us to be prudent in accepting them. Now, chapter and verse are totally lacking in the scattered political souvenirs of the "Cours de littérature"; and for the process of reconstructing a solid basis one can only have recourse to the memoirs of contemporaries, for his own published correspondence (an invaluable check on imaginative assertions) ceases with 1852. In spite of such mental reservations, however, it would be manifestly unfair to reject as unproved *all* of Lamartine's retrospective appreciations of what he accomplished, or intended to accomplish, during his tenure of office in 1848. No student of the life and character of this great genius can afford to leave unread the volumes of the "Cours familier de littérature." Therein will be found the psychological essence of the man who, having attained full maturity at their inception, gradually declined physically and intellectually, his pen still grasped firmly in his hand, until his fingers stiffened and fell lifeless at his side.

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[1] Nevertheless, in his eagerness to prevent Italian unity in 1848 and to secure the annexation of Savoy, Lamartine had been willing, at that period, to grant England a protectorate over Sicily and to place a Piedmontese prince upon the throne of the island kingdom. Cf. Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.* (*La politique étrangère*), p. 273.

[2] *Cours de littérature*, vol. XI, p. 70.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

[4] *Correspondance*, DCCCCXXXVI.

[5] Quentin-Bauchart, *op. cit.* (*La politique étrangère*), p. 344.

CHAPTER LVII

THE LAST SLEEP

On May 8, 1867, the Imperial Government of France, after frequent and often humiliating tergiversations, finally voted a bill granting Lamartine, as a National reward, the sum of half a million of francs.

This tardy act of public recognition of the inestimable services he had rendered was, however, accompanied by a restriction which greatly chagrined the aged poet. He was denied any control over the money voted him; the interest alone, at five per cent, being accorded him during his lifetime. On his demise the capital would be paid over to his adopted daughter, Valentine. This precaution, offensive as it must have been to his pride, was certainly a wise one. Lamartine's notions of financial administration were essentially those of a gambler. Speculation was his hobby. His combined optimism and enthusiasm (to which must be added a fatuous confidence in his superior judgment) made him the victim of the numerous financial combinations which had wrought his ruin.

With an annual income of twenty-five thousand francs and the loan of the villa at Passy, the Government at least guaranteed Lamartine a dignified retreat. As a matter of fact, we have M. Dubois's testimony that the broken old man occupied himself but little with his financial affairs after 1867.[1]

Valentine had assumed control, and proved herself an able administratrix, collecting and disbursing her uncle's income, which included the annuity from the

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[1] Cf. Caplain, *Édouard Dubois et Lamartine*, p. 147.

Sultan.[1] Only a year before the Government's grant, Valentine had written to M. de Chamborant (August 31, 1866): "... My uncle is devoured by anxiety over his affairs. His health would not be bad were it not for this constant worry. I can't express the bitterness in my soul over the harshness of certain men who take pleasure, I believe, in his martyrdom. . . . My uncle works a great deal: he has the admirable faculty of freeing himself from all other thoughts when the hour for work arrives; and I really think it is this that saves him."[2]

The salvation he found in this absorption in his work was, alas! to be short-lived. Incessant toil was beginning to break down the physical and mental vigour of the man of seventy-eight years of age. M. de Chamborant, who saw him for the last time in May, 1868, was greatly shocked by the change which had taken place since his visit of the previous year. "Lamartine, the fascinator of the furious mob! Lamartine, the profound thinker, the worker of inexhaustible fecundity, was there before me, stricken down by age. For a year past his intelligence, marvellously preserved till then, was clouded: the shadow of death hovered over his mighty spirit. I shall never forget the shudder which rent me as I beheld him crouching on the sofa of his salon in the chalet. The sun shed its warmth and light throughout the room, the lilac blossoms impregnated the air with their perfume. The great man, insensible to sunlight or the aroma of spring, or even the stir made by his visitors, kept his eyes closed, and seemed to sleep."[1] If he roused himself now and again to greet vaguely some new arrival, the effort was visibly painful, and he lapsed almost immediately into indifference or somnolence. "I have earned the right to silence," Lamartine remarked about this period to Alexandre.[2] Gradually the light was failing. Seated at the fireside of Saint-Point, or in the chalet in Paris, his apathy steadily increased. Surrounded by devoted friends, who sought to revive his flagging interest in mundane affairs, there were, indeed, occasional flashes beneath the ashes smothering the flame which had burnt so brilliantly. But darkness was gathering apace. One afternoon Valentine, in her effort to dispel the gloom, read to her uncle the touching verses describing the death of Lamartine in "Jocelyn." Melting into tears, Lamartine eagerly queried: "De qui sont ces beaux vers?"[3] The sublime beauty of the music of the words still appealed to his soul: all else was a blank.

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[1] Estimated in a letter from Dubois at nineteen thousand francs. Cf. Caplain, *Édouard Dubois et Lamartine*, p. 144.

[2] *Lamartine inconnu*, p. 275; cf. also Alexandre (*Souvenirs sur Lamartine*, p. 390), who cites a letter, dictated to Valentine, complaining of the hostility displayed in the Chamber of Deputies to the grant. Napoleon III again renewed his offer, at the moment, of a gift of two million francs from his privy purse: but Lamartine declined. "Je viens de voir un homme qui a refusé deux millions," said M. de La Guéronnière to Émile de Girardin, as he left Lamartine's presence. (*Op. cit.*, p. 390.) Cf. also Ollivier, *Lamartine*, p. 202.

The last summer and autumn of 1868 were spent as usual at Saint-Point, and in December the return to Paris was decided upon. Charles Alexandre describes, in his "Souvenirs," Lamartine's unwillingness to leave Mâcon. Did he realize that he was leaving his native town for the last time? There was almost a struggle to force him to leave his carriage and enter the train.[4] A few days previously, eluding the constant vigilance of his niece, he had started out alone and roamed the countryside, a prey to delirium, like King Lear.[5] It was the beginning of the end. During January and February, 1869, those watching over him realized that he would not be with them for long. A slight apoplectic seizure he had experienced before leaving Mâcon was followed by an-

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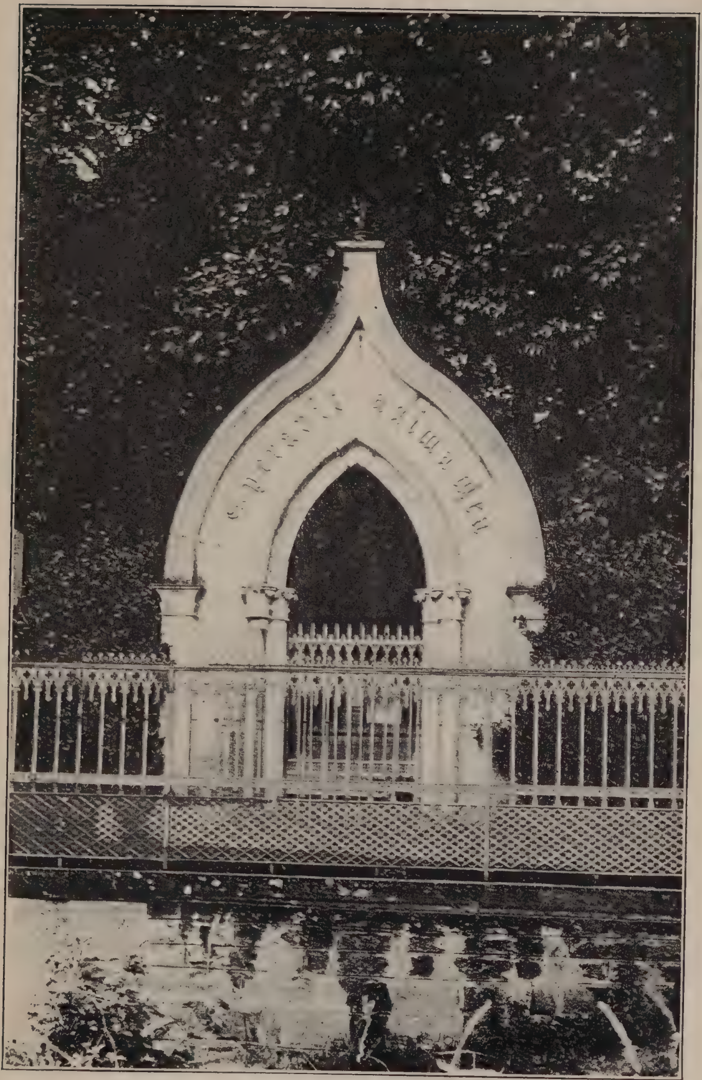
[1] Chamborant, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

[2] *Souvenirs de Lamartine*, p. 391.

[3] Cf. Barrès, *L'Abdication du poète*, p. 90.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 393.

[5] Des Cognets, *op. cit.*, p. 464.



THE TOMB OF LAMARTINE

other about the middle of February, leaving him dazed, but not helpless. He himself was conscious of impending dissolution, yet remained calm and serene to the end. Gently and without a struggle he entered upon his last sleep during the night of February 27. The crucifix which the dying "Elvire" (Madame Charles) had held to her lips in 1817, lay upon his breast.[1] His last conscious glance had been directed to the portraits of his mother, wife, and daughter, which hung opposite his bed.

According to the wishes of Lamartine, offers of a State funeral were declined. He had expressed the desire to be laid to rest at Saint-Point, beside the remains of his dear ones, without pomp or ceremony. In compliance with his oft-repeated request no speeches were made, either in Paris or when the vault was closed.

"J'ai vécu pour la foule, et je veux dormir seul!"

Alone, well-nigh forgotten by the world, Lamartine slept undisturbed at Saint-Point until the fêtes organized by the Académie de Mâcon in 1890, celebrating the centenary of his birth, awakened the echoes of his immortal genius.[2] This impressive ceremony, which betook of the nature of a world-wide homage, was followed, in 1913, by an equally representative international gathering of political and literary notabilities at Bergues, where, on September 21, the eightieth anniversary of Lamartine's election as deputy from the Département du Nord was solemnly commemorated, a beautiful bust, on the façade of the Hôtel de Ville, being unveiled.[3]

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[1] Auguste Dorchain, *Discours sur Lamartine*, p. 13.

[2] Cf. *Le Centenaire de Lamartine*, published by the Académie de Mâcon, and giving *verbatim* the speeches made on this memorable occasion.

[3] Cf. *A. Lamartine, 1833–1913*, containing the speeches delivered. In July, 1886, a most unworthy statue of Lamartine was unveiled in an out-of-the-way little Parisian square at Passy. Mâcon possesses a more digni-

"Ah! quel peuple!" he had written. "On peut le maudire dans ses inconstances; mais il faut l'adorer pour sa fidélité et ses retours!"

Lamartine has come into his own again. The generous people of France, awakened from their torpor, seize any opportunity of demonstrating their appreciation, tardy, but none the less sincere, of the honest statesman and incomparable poet, who loved them so well.

fied monument, and the village of Milly a bust. Political jealousies would seem to have prevented the erection of a monument on the only site befitting his fame — the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, in Paris.

THE END

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